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THE EASTERN QUESTION

A HISTORY OF THE OTTOMAN TURKS AND OF EUROPEAN DIPLOMACY IN THE BALKANS TO 1917

By J. A. R. MARRIOTT

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THE EUROPEAN COMMONWEALTH

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THE EUROPEAN COMMONWEALTH

PROBLEMS HISTORICAL AND DIPLOMATIC

BY

J. A. R. MARRIOTT

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PREFACE

THE essays contained in this volume represent a selection from a much larger number contributed to quarterly and monthly *Reviews* during the last four years. They have been selected because, though not originally designed as steps in a coherent argument, they seem to possess a certain measure of unity and consistency. With one exception all have been written since the outbreak of the war, and the single exception (Chapter III) stands in at least as close a relation to recent events as the rest. Suggested though they were by successive aspects of the great struggle in which Europe and the world have been involved, the essays are the fruit of studies which have claimed a large portion of my time during the last thirty years.

The underlying unity of the book will be found in the problem presented to Europe by the evolution of the Nation-State and the working of the influential though elusive principle of nationality. For four hundred years the foundation of the unified and consolidated Nation-State was the goal of political ambition. The present war has raised in an acute form the question whether the resulting product can be regarded as the last word in political science? Has the process ended in bankruptcy? Is the States-system, in the form with which Europe has been familiar since the close of the fifteenth century, destined to disappear? If so, what is to take its place? These are problems rather for the political philosopher or the international jurist than for the mere historian; but the historian may perhaps make some modest contribution to their solution, and it is in the hope of making it, at a moment when the world is confronted by a multitude of obstinate questionings, that I have been moved to publish this volume.

Of the fifteen essays five have appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, five in the *Nineteenth Century and After*, three in the *Fortnightly Review*, one in the *Quarterly Review*, and one in the *Hibbert Journal*. None of the articles are reproduced precisely in the form in which they originally appeared; all have been carefully revised, and some of them have been largely re-written. Nevertheless, I owe and desire to express my grateful thanks to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., to Mr. W. Wray Skilbeck, to Messrs. Chapman & Hall, to Mr. John Murray, and to the Rev. Principal Jacks, for permission to utilize the substance of articles contributed to the above *Reviews*. I must also thank Sir Arthur Evans for permission, most generously accorded, to use his map of the Adriatic and the Balkans, and Mr. C. Grant Robertson, C.V.O. and Mr. Bartholomew, for permission to make a like use of two maps of Poland contained in their invaluable Modern Historical Atlas. To my publishers I am deeply indebted for the great care bestowed upon the adaptation and preparation of the maps, and not least to their compositors and readers for the manner in which they have lightened my task of proof reading. It is proper to add that I have previously made some use of three of the articles in my history of the *Eastern Question* (Clarendon Press, 1917), but their inclusion seemed essential to any claim to completeness, however slight, to which the present volume might pretend.

J. A. R. MARRIOTT.

OXFORD,
October, 1918.

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CHAPTER I

Introductory

NATIONALISM, INTERNATIONALISM, AND SUPERNATIONALISM

It is at once a paradox and a truism that one of the most striking results of the present conflict of the nations should have been the rediscovery of European if not of world unity. That rediscovery has been peculiarly difficult for a typical Englishman, and even more difficult perhaps for a typical American. The insularity of the one, the geographical remoteness and the political security of the other, has unquestionably tended to induce in both, in times gone by, a political and intellectual isolation. The 'good European' has been rare among Englishmen; in America he is, naturally enough, almost unknown. But rapid changes are in progress. Science has annihilated distance; war has broken down many barriers; and the abrupt emergence of broad ethical issues has rendered continued aloofness not merely an offence against good manners, but a crime against humanity. Nay, more: war has not only reawakened a sense of the brotherhood of man; it has gone far to re-establish the community of nations. The stirring of a new spirit has operated very differently upon different minds: it has led some to look back wistfully to the oecumenical unity of the past; it has led others to look forward hopefully to the possibility of realizing, by very different methods, a different kind of unity in a not too distant future. How to reorganize society; to reconstruct institutions; to reshape the European polity, so as to avert a recurrence of the cataclysm which has lately engulfed the world—this is of all the problems raised by the War the largest and the most insistent.

But there are many others. For the last four hundred years Europe has presented the aspect less of a unified polity, governed at least in some important domains of human interests and activities by a common law, owing allegiance to a common ecclesiastical superior, than of a congeries of independent nation-states. During the last century, ever since the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, the principle of Nationality has occupied a joint throne with the dogma of Liberalism. Neither commands to-day unquestioning obedience. Liberalism, as interpreted by the disciples of Bentham, has landed us, so men are apt to assert, in social and economic anarchy at home. Nationalism, finding its apotheosis in the sovereignty of the absolute State, has similarly conduced to anarchy abroad. Be the indictment against Liberalism and Nationalism flimsy or substantial, there can be no question that the suspicion is widely entertained. The fashionable revolt against the orthodox doctrines of the nineteenth century is tending, however, towards a further paradox. Men seek to redress the evils arising from the doctrine of *laisser-faire* by invoking in domestic affairs the assistance of the State; in the field of international politics they seek to restrain the omnipotence of the State by infringing its sovereign rights and by erecting a super-national authority. But the paradox is superficial rather than substantial. In both cases men are feeling after a corrective to unrestrained individualism. In both they invoke the intervention of authority. The authority must, however, derive not from the will of the ruler, but from the assent of the ruled. The State, if it is to be vested with large powers for the restraint of the individual citizen, must rest upon a democratic basis. The super-national authority must be the organ of a league not of autocrats but of peoples.

Ideas such as these, inchoate and indefinite though they be, are widely diffused. How far they are likely to assume material shape, how far, if they do, they will assist or retard the reconstruction of a shattered civilization, are questions which cannot now be pursued. The mere existence of such speculations is a sufficiently impressive phenomenon. It seems

to point to the passing of one era in world-politics, and to the inauguration of another.

Experience forbids the supposition that after an upheaval such as in these last years we have witnessed, a settlement can be reached merely by a restoration of the *status quo ante bellum*. The diplomatists who in 1814 assembled at Vienna made a valiant attempt to eradicate the doctrines bequeathed to Europe by the French Revolution; to obliterate all traces of the havoc wrought by the conquests of Napoleon; to set up again land-marks that had been thrown down; to carve out duchies and kingdoms for the cadets of ruling dynasties; to delimit frontiers and to distribute territory. But the scourge which Napoleon had applied to the ancient Europe had not been wholly destructive. His personal ambitions were those of a vulgar conqueror, but the results of his conquests were in several cases, notably in Italy and Germany, palpably and happily constructive. German nationalism and Italian nationalism alike owe an immense debt to the ruthlessness of Napoleon. The diplomatists of Vienna strove to set back the hands of the clock, and to make things seem as though they had not been. But they strove in vain.

As a consequence of this failure the Metternichs, the Castlereaghs, and the Talleyrands have fared ill at the hands of historical critics. But it is essential to a fair judgement to remember that while the critics have only had to deal with the diplomatists, the diplomatists had to deal with the facts. And the facts of the situation by which they were confronted were unusually awkward.

It is commonly asserted and believed that the authors of the settlement of 1815 were actuated by an exclusive deference to the claims of dynasties; that they clung to the outworn dogmas of the eighteenth century, and sought only to restore the 'Balance of Power'. There is abundant evidence to support this contention, but it does not contain the whole truth. Down to 1814 the statesmen of the Coalition had one supreme end in view: the overthrow of the Napoleonic Empire, if not necessarily the dethronement of Napoleon.

To attain that end many treaties were concluded, and many obligations were incurred. To guard his flank against Napoleon in 1812, the Tsar Alexander had been compelled by the Treaty of Abo to promise Norway to Sweden; by the Treaty of Kalisch (February 1813) he had undertaken that Prussia should be restored to a position not less territorially favourable than that which she had occupied before the disastrous Treaty of Tilsit; by the Treaty of Töplitz (September 1813) Austria had received a promise that she should recover the territories she had held prior to 1805, and the independence of the Confederates of the Rhine had been guaranteed; by the Treaty of Ried (October 1813) the King of Bavaria had extorted a pledge that he should retain full sovereign rights and all the territories which he acquired through Napoleon except the Tyrol and the Austrian districts on the Inn. It had also been agreed that Belgium should be united with Holland, that Venetia and part of Lombardy should go to the Emperor of Austria in compensation for the loss of the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium), and that Genoa should be handed over to the kingdom of Sardinia. In each of these cases substantial arguments could be advanced in favour of the proposed arrangement; moreover, these bargains represented the price which had to be paid for the continued solidarity of the alliance against Napoleon. The diplomatists who in the autumn of 1814 assembled round the council-board at Vienna could neither ignore the arrangements nor repudiate them. Their hands were tied. And however little we may like the ultimate results of their labours, this much may be said on behalf of the statesmen of that day: they got rid of Napoleon and they secured to Europe forty years of peace. Little trace of their handiwork can now be discerned upon the map of Europe. Norway and Belgium have taken their places among Sovereign States; Alsace and Lorraine, retained, thanks to the good offices of Wellington, by France in 1815, have been retaken by Germany; the *morcellement* of Italy has given place to Unity; Venetia, torn in 1814 from the side of Italy, has at last taken its place in the unified kingdom. But only

in part. Bismarck made his bargain with Italy in 1866, but his pledges were fulfilled with a niggardly hand; the Trentino remained in the hands of the Habsburgs; Trieste, Istria, and Dalmatia are still 'unredeemed'; the problem of the Adriatic is still, therefore, as will be seen later, unsolved. The problem of Poland, of all the problems which confronted the diplomatists at Vienna perhaps the most difficult, has thus far defied every attempt to solve it. Equally insoluble, it would seem, is a problem to which little heed was paid in 1815, the problem as to the future of the Balkan peninsula, and of the other territories which have formed part of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, Africa, and Asia.

These questions are, however, mainly territorial. They may be solved, so simple folk suppose, by the application of a formula—the principle of 'self-determination'. The formula is attractive, but its application is not easy. Much must depend upon the selection of the unit. To whom is the right of 'self-determination' to be conceded? To the Genoese, for example, or to the Italians? To the Trentini or to the Tyrolese? To the Czechs or the Austrians? To Britons or Welshmen? To the people of Ireland, or the people of Ulster? But even if we may hope to find a solution for territorial problems; even if we can satisfy the claims of nationalities; there will still remain problems of even larger import.

One such problem was forced into prominence by the immediate antecedents of the present War. Are solemn treaties to be regarded as mere 'scraps of paper'? Is their observance to be merely a matter of international convenience? Is there such a thing as 'public law' in Europe? Who is to enforce the fulfilment of contracts between State and State? Where may we look for the sanctions of international law? 'The time will come when Treaties shall be more than truces, when it will again be possible for them to be observed with that religious faith, that sacred inviolability, on which depends the reputation, the strength, and the preservation of Empires.' So ran the preamble to the Treaty of Kalisch, concluded, as we have seen, between Russia and

Prussia in 1813. A hundred years have passed, but the hopes held out in the preamble have not yet been realized. Treaties are still regarded, in some quarters, as no more than truces, and in no sense entitled to 'sacred inviolability'.

Can it ever be otherwise so long as the sovereignty of independent nations is regarded as the last word in international politics? Is not 'anarchy' the inevitable consequence of unrestricted nationalism; of the exaltation of the doctrine of State rights? 'Every State has its right to exist, acquired by history, and it follows the lines of evolution prescribed for it by nature and history. But the State-will, which has found a vehicle in a firmly-compacted fabric, is above all else a *striving for power* (*Machtstreben*). Hence the nations are obliged to try issues with each other (*sich miteinander abzufinden*). Their co-existence is an eternal battle, in which only the efficient nation can stand upright, and the supreme interest of the State is to maintain itself.'[1] Thus a distinguished German historian. The theologian's language is not dissimilar: 'The continuous interaction of nations (*der Prozess der Völker unter einander*) is War, and that will never be otherwise, as things are ordered in this world.'[2] Granted the premisses, it is difficult to detect any flaw in the reasoning.

In what direction, then, must we seek a way of escape? The Germans have no doubt as to the answer: 'A world-peace will be obtained by the German sword; the Empire of the Hohenzollern will bring to the world a repose such as it has never known since the dissolution of the Empire of the Caesars. The last and greatest of the Ghibellines, the true heir of "the Holy Roman Empire of the German people", shall succeed where Hohenstaufen and Luxemburgs failed, and shall realize the ideal at once of Dante and of Machiavelli.' The claim appears to us to be absurd and extravagant; yet it were folly to ignore the grain of idealism

[1] Paul Herre, Professor of History at Leipzig, *Weltpolitik und Weltkatastrophe*, 1890–1915, p. 12,

[2] Dr. Feine, *Kreuz-Zeitung* for June 17, 1915. Both these passages are quoted by Mr. Edwyn Bevan, *The Method in the Madness*, pp. 36, 37. See also note at end of chapter.

contained in the bushel of bombastic chaff. That the Germanic heaven can be reached only after much tribulation may be true; but it is irrelevant. The world must be purged as by fire; but ultimately it will win through Purgatory to Paradise. Such is the Teutonic solution of a problem admittedly obstinate and baffling.

Though baffling, the problem is not new; it is unprecedented only in its proportions. On a smaller scale it confronted the statesmen and thinkers of medieval Italy. The greatest of those thinkers wrestled with it both in poetry and prose. In the *De Monarchia* we have an attempt to solve it. That the great Ghibelline poet, 'weary of the endless strife of princes and cities, of the factions within every city against each other, seeing municipal freedom, the only mitigation of turbulence, vanish with the rise of domestic tyrants',[1] should look to a revival of the power of the world-empire of Rome, in the person of a German prince, was natural enough. The Guelphs could bring no peace to a distracted Italy. In its Temporal mission the Papacy had lamentably failed. Where Pope had failed, Emperor might succeed. In the *De Monarchia* we have, therefore, an elaborate argument for an Empire or world-power. The first requisite for the attainment of the goal of human civilization is peace. 'In quietness the individual grows perfect in knowledge and in wisdom; clearly, then, it is in the quiet or tranquillity of peace that society as a whole is best fitted for its proper work, which may be called divine,' and for the attainment of world-peace 'there must be a monarchy or Empire'. Independent sovereignties are inconsistent with the maintenance of peace: 'between any two princes, one of whom is in no way subject to the other, contention may arise, either through their own fault or that of their subjects. Wherefore, there must needs be judgement between them. And since the one may not take cognizance of what concerns the other, the one not being subject to the other (for a peer has no rule over his peer), there must needs be a third, of wider jurisdiction, who has princedom over both . . . hence

[1] Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, p. 265.

the necessity for a world-empire.' The Roman Empire was, therefore, ordained of God to secure tranquillity to mankind; the Emperors were the servants of their people; in subjecting the world to itself the Roman people attained to Empire by right; and that right was established and revealed by God-given victory in arms. Under that Empire, at the zenith of the Augustan monarchy, Christ himself chose to be born. But Christ sanctioned the authority of that Empire not only by His birth but by His death, accepting as judicially valid the sentence of Pontius Pilate. Nor did the subsequent institution of the Church impair the prior authority of the Empire. Church and Empire were alike ordained of God; both were dependent upon God; neither was subordinate to the other; each was in its separate sphere supreme; the supreme pontiff in the spiritual sphere ordained 'to lead the human race in accordance with things revealed to life eternal'; the Emperor, in the secular sphere, ordained 'to guide humanity to temporal felicity in accordance with the teachings of philosophy'.

Such, in brief, is the argument of Dante's famous treatise. The summary, however rapid and rough, will suffice to show how readily the argument, devised as an apology for a Luxemburg Emperor, lends itself to the ambitions of the Hohenzollern. The divine right of the Augustan Empire was transmitted, through the Roman Pontiff, to the Holy Roman Empire of the Ottos, the Hohenstaufen, and Habsburgs; and from thence it has descended, morally if not juridically, to the Hohenzollern Emperors of modern Germany. To the Hohenzollern it will fall, by the judgement of the God of battles (cf. *De Monarchia*, Book II, c. viii), to restore to a distracted world the blessings of perpetual peace— peace attained by the German sword.

Is this a legitimate inference from the argument of the *De Monarchia*? That it contains a superficial plausibility cannot be denied. But the inference is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Go back to the argument of Dante. For the well-being of the world the first prerequisite is Justice; the most dangerous enemy to Justice is cupidity: 'when

the will is not pure from all cupidity, even though justice be present, yet she is not absolutely there in the glow of her purity.' To execute justice the Ruler must empty himself of all selfish ambitions, and must 'render to each what is his due', and must render it in the spirit of Christian charity. Only in a monarch can this be looked for (Book I, c. xi). It is clear, then, that Dante's Imperialism, as one of the best of modern commentators has pointed out, 'does not mean the supremacy of one nation over others, but the existence of a supreme law which can hold all national passions in check.'[1] Deeply penetrated by the teaching of Aristotle, and adapting, like his master, the teleological method, Dante defines things by their end or purpose (τέλος). God has created nothing in vain. The goal of human civilization is the realizing of all the potentialities of the human mind. This realization demands the harmonious development and co-operation of the several members of the universal body politic; for such co-operation peace is essential, and for the attainment of peace there must be 'one guiding or ruling power. And this is what we mean by Monarchy or Empire' (I. 5). Monarchy, then, is necessary for the well-being of the world.

Rome supplied the need. The harmonious co-operation of the several members of the universal body politic was secured through the supremacy of law. The Roman law, as Dr. Wicksteed comments, 'is the supreme instrument for the regulation of the earthly affairs of men'; but it is powerless without an efficient executive. To this thought Dante frequently recurs in the *Purgatorio*:

> Che val, perchè ti racconciasse il freno
> Giustiniano, se la sella è vota?
> Senz' esso fora la vergogna meno. (vi. 88–90.)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Le leggi son, ma chi pon mano ad esse?
> Nullo: però che il pastor che precede
> Ruminar può, ma non ha l'unghie fesse. (xvi. 97–9.)
>
> . . . . . .

[1] Dr. P. H. Wicksteed, *Latin Works of Dante*, note to *De Monarchia*, I. x (p. 149).

Soleva Roma, che il buon mondo feo,
Due Soli aver, che l'una e l'altra strada
Facean vedere, e del mondo e di Deo.
(xvi. 106–8.)

Only under the reign of law can the world enjoy true liberty. But whence may we look for the return of the *Saturnia regna*? When shall Justice be enthroned? Such questions make a direct and special appeal to the heart and conscience of mankind to-day. The conviction deepens that, if the blood so freely offered up on the altars of patriotism and humanity is not to have been poured out in vain, some means must be found for the re-establishment of the reign of law; the world must not be allowed to relapse into the condition of anarchy in which, as many hold, the present conflict had its origin. The quest is not an easy one; but it is being pursued with ardour. In the United States of America there has been established 'A League to enforce Peace'. In this country the principle of a 'League of Nations' commands an increasing number of influential and thoughtful adherents. Such movements may at least be taken as symptomatic of a conviction that mere nationalism will not solve the problem of humanity, that 'wheresoever contention may arise there must needs be judgement'; that to pronounce judgement there must be a supreme tribunal, and that a supreme tribunal demands a sovereign prince.

But sovereignty, as Hobbes perceived and insisted, need not be vested in an individual. The Great Leviathan may take the form of a Commonwealth. And whatever the form the end is the same: 'the maintenance of security and the enforcement of covenants'; and 'covenants without the sword are but words'. For the enforcement of covenants, throughout a large part of the civilized world, and to the maintenance of peace there has been no more effective guarantee in world-history than that provided by the British Empire. And never has this truth been more clearly perceived or more emphatically proclaimed than by a soldier-statesman who once bore arms against us.

'People talk', said General Smuts, 'about a league of nations and international government, but the only successful experi-

ment in international government that has ever been made is the British Empire, founded on principles which appeal to the highest political ideals of mankind.'[1]

And elsewhere:

'This ideal of an organized free co-operative basis for the Society of Nations, which would have appeared chimerical before the War, is so no longer, though many generations will elapse before it will be in full working order. The interesting point is that in the . . . British Commonwealth of Nations this transition from the old legalistic idea of political sovereignty, based on force, to the new social idea of constitutional freedom, based on consent, has been gradually evolving for more than a century. . . . As the Roman ideas guided European civilization for almost two thousand years, so the newer ideas embedded in the British constitutional and colonial system may, when carried to their full development, guide the future civilization for ages to come.'[2]

It may seem a far cry from Dante to General Smuts, from the *De Monarchia* to the British Commonwealth, yet the transition is less abrupt than would superficially appear. The great Florentine poet beheld, with agonized soul, an Italy distracted by faction and war. The tragedy of medieval Italy is re-enacted on an infinitely larger stage before the eyes of mankind to-day. How to evolve order out of the chaos, how to make impossible for the future a recurrence of the catastrophe, how to rebuild upon the ruins of a shattered civilization a more stately and more stable edifice—this is the problem upon which, for many years to come, the best thought of the best minds must needs be concentrated.

The following chapters are based upon essays all of which have been written during the last four years. They were not written with any idea of republication in a single volume, and the thread upon which they are now strung may seem to be in places somewhat slender. But a thread, I think, there is. Thus, the next chapter discusses the origins of modern diplomacy, and sketches the evolution of the States-system of modern Europe. In the third I attempt to indicate the attitude of Great Britain towards some of the chief questions which disturbed continental Europe in the latest period of the Nation-State era.

[1] *War-Time Speeches*, p. 13. [2] Ibid., p. vii.

That era, as we are now beginning to perceive, came to an end with the seventies of the last century. By 1878 Europe was exhaustively parcelled out among Nation-States. But already a new era was dawning. The horizon of men's minds, and the orbit of their ambitions, were enlarged by the discoveries of science. Contests for hegemony in Europe began to seem but a puny matter in comparison with the struggle for world-empire which was more and more clearly perceived to be impending. The expansion of Russia, the marvellous development of the United States of America, and above all the growing cohesion and increasing self-consciousness of the British Empire announced to the world that Politics had entered upon a new phase. With this new phase, with the new orientation of history, and the development of a *Weltpolitik*, the fourth chapter is concerned. A rapid succession of events, momentous in isolation, but even more significant when regarded from the point of view of their cumulative effect, illustrated and emphasized the new political tendencies: the British occupation of Egypt; the expansion of the French Empire in Tunis and Morocco; the partition of the African continent among the European Powers; the tardy but impressive foundation of a German Colonial Empire: its large share in the partition of Africa: its appearance in the Pacific; the discovery of gold in the Transvaal and the consequent rush of European speculators; the rapid expansion of British influence on the African continent: in Nigeria; on the East coast; in Uganda; in the Soudan; the war between China and Japan; the new significance attached (in 1895) to a boundary incident in a small South American republic; the Spanish-American War; the conquest of the Philippines and the definite acceptance by the United States of the responsibilities of world-power; the occupation of strategical points in the northern Pacific by Germany, Russia, France, and Great Britain; the war between Britons and Boers in South Africa; the rapid development of the German navy; the Boxer rising in China and the consequent intervention of the Powers; the conclusion of an alliance between Great Britain and Japan; the agreement between England and France; the dramatic

defeat inflicted by Japan upon a great European Power; the Anglo-Russian Convention; the reopening of the Near Eastern question; the annexation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary; the Italian expedition to Tripoli; the formation of the Balkan League and the outbreak of the Balkan Wars; the apparently imminent annihilation of the last remnants of the Ottoman power in Europe; the inauguration of a *Mittel-Europa* policy and the promotion of the scheme for an all-German route from Hamburg to the Persian Gulf—all these things seemed to portend the opening of a new era in world-history.

Other chapters in this volume will deal with questions more directly arising out of or accentuated by the present War: with the policy which, with rare consistency, has been for centuries pursued by the Hohenzollern rulers of Prussia and of Germany; with the difficulties encountered by Great Britain in adapting its institutions to the exigencies of war; with the place of Belgium in the European polity, and the influence of the Low Countries upon English policy; with the problem presented to Europe by the annihilation of the kingdom of Poland and the unquenched and unquenchable aspirations of the Polish people; with successive phases of the Balkan problem; with the problem of the Adriatic and the conflicting aspirations of Italians and Southern Slavs.

Emphasis will be laid not merely or so much upon the particularist aspects of these and other problems as upon their relation to the common weal of Europe; and attention will be drawn to the interesting experiment in the organization of peace initiated by the Tsar Alexander I. It is in some ways unfortunate that the practical outcome of that experiment, deflected from its original purpose by the dominating influence of Metternich, should have tended to obscure the generous and pure-minded if fantastic aspirations which had captured the mystical imagination of Alexander. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* The Holy Alliance quickly degenerated into a league of despots, bent upon eliminating from the body-politic of Europe the last traces of the revolutionary virus with which it had been inoculated by France. But autocracy was not of

the essence of the experiment. The Holy Alliance foundered upon a rock the danger of which had from the first been perceived and emphasized by two of the most brilliant of English diplomatists. Castlereagh and Canning, though not less anxious than Alexander for the maintenance of good relations between the Powers, were profoundly mistrustful of the means by which the Tsar proposed to attain his ends. For them it was not easy to judge the Holy Alliance apart from the personality of the Holy Allies. To the English statesmen the character of the Tsar appeared to be compounded of calculating ambition and impracticable mysticism. Metternich they regarded as a mere reactionary, devoted to the principle of autocracy and determined at all costs and in all directions to assert it. A later generation may view the episode of the Holy Alliance in more generous and more accurate perspective. But whatever the ultimate judgement may be it will not be denied that the history of the experiment is of peculiar significance at a time when the world has been again plunged by the blood-lust of a single Power into a devastating war; when men are again most anxiously and gravely canvassing the possibility of avoiding a recurrence of similar cataclysms in the future; and, in particular, when projects of a League of Peace are in the air.

There is indeed a consensus of opinion that if the present War should end without a serious and sustained effort for the better organization of peace the bankruptcy of modern statesmanship would stand confessed. Under these circumstances the thoughts of men tend to recur to first principles. How did man originally emerge from that state of perpetual war which, as certain philosophers have taught, was his primitive condition? He emerged, so we have learnt on the same authority, by the conclusion of a mutual covenant.

The doctrine of a Social Compact, as enunciated by Hooker, and Milton, and Hobbes, may have been unhistorical; contract, as Maine contended, may be the goal rather than the origin of civil society; but the doctrine, true or false, played an important and indeed decisive part in more than one of the great crises of modern history: developed and interpreted by Locke,

it provided a philosophical apology for the aristocratic revolution of 1688 in England; enlarged and applied by the genius of Rousseau, it supplied a formula for the democratic revolution in France. Historically false, it was nevertheless philosophically valid, and politically it served to ease several difficult situations.

Nor is its utility exhausted. Serviceable as a solvent of domestic problems, it may be destined to an even more important function. The theory of contract may yet supply the solution of the international problem. For the last few centuries we have regarded the Sovereign State as the final stage in the evolution of European society, as the last word in the science of the State. But the doctrine of State-Sovereignty has landed us in anarchy. It is clearly necessary to reconsider the validity of the premisses from which many of our most cherished deductions have been drawn. Among these is the hitherto accepted basis of international relations. The experience of the last four years has proved that in the sphere of international politics our boasted advance is almost wholly illusory. No one ever imagined that the same sort of sanctity attached to international agreements as to municipal laws. The absence of a common superior forbade the supposition. On the other hand, it was unimaginable that solemn treaties would be treated as mere 'scraps of paper' to be torn up at the first moment when such a process suited the convenience of any one of the signatories. It was hoped by the more sanguine that the rapid progress of international arbitration would render a war between leading Powers almost impossible; even the less sanguine supposed that if war should break out it would be conducted with due regard to the rules, framed in the interests of humanity and embodied in a series of international conventions, such as those concluded at Geneva in 1864 and 1868, and at St. Petersburg in 1867. But these hopes have been destroyed, these suppositions have been falsified by the hard and hideous realities of the present contest. The forces of barbarism are unchained; the boasted achievements of science have been turned to the destruction of civilization.

Again we are fain to ask: where is the path of escape? To the rule of force there would seem to be only one alternative: the reign of law, and the consequent enforcement of contracts. Within the sphere of municipal government we have learnt that without law there can be no true liberty. Destroy the sanction of law and we shall all be flung back into the state of nature imagined by Hobbes, where the life of man is 'nasty, brutish, and short'. For the individual citizen, then, law is not the antithesis but the complement of liberty. Can law also secure liberty to nations? This much at least is certain: that, if brute force is to supply the only cement of the European edifice, small states, if not small nations, are doomed to extinction. In a real European Commonwealth, resting upon the sanction of law, they may still find a place. The problem of the small State will demand attention in subsequent chapters. Here it must suffice to have indicated its existence.

A further question remains. Assume the promulgation of an international code: assume the establishment of a social compact between independent States. *Quis custodiet custodes?* Who will guarantee the observance of treaties and the fulfilment of contracts? Clearly this task must be confided to a super-national authority; the mere erection of such an authority would imply the limitation of absolute State-Sovereignty; such a limitation could, as things are, only result from voluntary renunciation. Are the peoples of the world ready for such an act of abnegation? Further: even if, under the stress of discipline and suffering, their minds are attuned to a break with the traditions of the recent past, have they reached such a point in the development of an international public opinion as to justify a reasonable hope that they would, even to their own national detriment, persist in well-doing? No quixotic impulse begotten of the contemplation of the misery of a war-ridden world will suffice to sustain an altruistic resolution. Nothing save the continuously exerted pressure of a changed public opinion will avail. No one but a cynic would say a word which could retard the change; but it is the part of prudence to recognize that such a change must

be gradual and will probably be slow. When the *Projet de paix perpétuelle* of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre was submitted to Cardinal Fleury, the Cardinal is said to have observed laconically: 'Admirable, save for one omission; I find no provision for sending missionaries to convert the heart of princes.' The observation, though perhaps cynical, indicates succinctly a line of argument which it were folly to ignore. Before the consummation, devoutly to be wished for, can be reached, there must be among the nations a real change of heart; there must, in the language of the Christian Ethic, be 'repentance'; the whole world must 'repent' in sackcloth and ashes. Without such a change of heart the erection of the elaborate machinery of super-nationalism would be a vain and delusive enterprise; given a change of heart, the machinery might prove to be superfluous.[1]

[1] I am glad to find the main argument advanced in this chapter powerfully reinforced by Mr. G. L. Beer's suggestive work *The English-speaking Peoples* (New York, 1917), a work which came to my notice only after my own volume went to press.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF MODERN DIPLOMACY

THE days in which we live are, in more than one sense, critical. It is a testing time for nations, for individuals, for established institutions, and not least for preconceived ideas. None may hope to survive unless they can establish their claim before the supreme tribunal of reason. Great traditions, great achievements, even great and acknowledged services will avail little to mitigate the severity of the judgement, except in so far as these things afford a presumption of high efficiency in the present, and of sure promise for the future.

In this general scrutiny the methods and machinery of Diplomacy cannot hope to escape. There is a general disposition to affirm, and in some quarters to believe, that 'Diplomacy', as hitherto practised and understood, is largely responsible for the great tragedy which for four years or more has filled the world-stage. Whether that grave charge can or cannot be substantiated is a question which need not for the moment be discussed. Other critics, more reflective and better trained, push the responsibility one stage farther back. They attribute the present catastrophe less to the conduct of international affairs than to the fact that affairs should be international at all. The ultimate genesis of the world conflict of to-day is sought, and by some inquirers is found, in the relatively recent development of the existing European polity—a polity based upon the recognition of the rights of a large number of Nation-States, entirely independent and nominally coequal. Both attributions may be regarded as slightly academic, but, as will be seen presently, they are not really so wide apart.

There is, however, another point of more immediate significance. It is safe to assume that the present War or the peace by which it is concluded will mark an exceedingly important

epoch in the history of diplomacy. The young democracies, and the more advanced parties in the older democracies, will obviously not be content to leave the ordering of international relations to the high priests of the diplomatic mysteries. They are determined to control foreign no less than domestic policy. Whether such control is likely to conduce to the maintenance of peace, is a question on which there may legitimately be differences of opinion. One thing, however, is certain: the leaders of the New Democracy are not likely to be deterred from the attempt by any diffidence as to their competence for the task they essay. It is not denied that they may in the future make mistakes, but in their own opinion those mistakes are likely to be fewer, more venial, and less disastrous in their consequences than the blunders perpetrated in the past by trained diplomatists, by crowned heads, and by uncrowned capitalists. Whatever may be thought of these confident anticipations, and of the implied criticism of the existing system, there can be little doubt that an attempt will, in the near future, be made to 'democratize' foreign policy, to devise new machinery for the control of the Chanceries, and to transfer to elected assemblies, or to committees selected from and immediately responsible to them, functions which have hitherto been deemed to belong to the executive rather than to the legislative side of government. If, however, the attempt is not to issue in disaster, swift and irretrievable, there is one condition precedent, the importance of which will not by any reasonable person be denied: those who essay the task of controlling foreign policy must equip themselves by patient and assiduous study both of the science of Politics and of the art of Diplomacy. It may, indeed, be objected that it is superfluous to acquire the rules of the game, since the new diplomatists do not mean to play the same game nor to play it according to the old rules. But they cannot avoid the pitfalls unless they know their location, nor amend rules which they have never recited.

The literature of the subject, in English, has hitherto been singularly, though characteristically, meagre. France, for reasons easily intelligible, is, on the contrary, exceptionally affluent in this respect. There is, for example, nothing in

English at all comparable to the series of diplomatic dispatches which the French Government has published in a series of admirably edited volumes—*Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France.* The student of English medieval history is indeed fortunate in the possession of the great collection of Chronicles issued under the aegis of the Master of the Rolls. From Roger of Hoveden and Walter of Coventry, for example, you may learn all that any one can reasonably want to know of the foreign policy of the early Plantagenets. The historian of the sixteenth century is provided with the *Calendar of State Papers* to assist his researches into the diplomacy of Henry VII, of Wolsey, of Burleigh, or of Queen Elizabeth. No such facilities exist for the study of the seventeenth century, or the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. The historian of these periods must seek his materials in manuscript either at the Record Office or the Foreign Office, but without a special permit he can obtain access to the Foreign Office Papers only down to 1837, and with a permit only down to 1860, a date quite arbitrarily selected.[1] For the actual texts of nineteenth-century treaties recourse may be had to the collection of Sir Edward Hertslet, and for the period actually covered (1814–91) it would be impossible to better that collection. For the rest, there are the stray volumes of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the annual volume of British and Foreign State Papers, and the Parliamentary Papers. But the latter lack consecutiveness, and have been carefully 'edited'. At every turn the serious students of English diplomacy are discouraged and baffled; while the people who look up to them are not fed. It is small wonder, therefore, that the governing masses in this country should be less well equipped for the intelligent discussion of questions of foreign policy than most of their continental neighbours, nor that, in the circumstances, they should hitherto have betrayed little curiosity as to the conduct of oversea affairs.

There are, however, indications that this indifference is coming to an end. The outbreak of a great war has stimulated interest in the history and methods of diplomacy as

[1] Cf. C. H. Firth, Presidential address to the Royal Historical Society.

nothing else could have done, with the result that the shelves in our libraries devoted to European History and Diplomacy are rapidly filling up. Among the works on this subject recently published brief mention may be made of two or three.

One is from the pen of Sir Ernest Satow, himself a diplomatist of distinction and wide experience, and bears the title *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*.[1] On behalf of Sir E. Satow's work the claim is made by its editor that 'it is unique with regard to the method of treatment of the subject, as well as the selection of the topics discussed'. Nor, so far as English literature is concerned, can the claim be contested. Its intention and scope are precisely indicated by its title. The first volume may be regarded primarily as a text-book for practical diplomatists. It deals in detail with the machinery of diplomacy; the constitution and functions of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; the language of diplomatic intercourse and forms of documents; credentials; the selection, position, immunities, and classification of diplomatic agents; the reception and termination of a mission, and so forth. The treatment is, however, far less forbidding than such a bare enumeration would suggest. Apart from special chapters devoted to such topics as precedence among States, titles and precedence among sovereigns, maritime honours, and 'counsels to diplomatists', the more technical topics are treated with a wealth of historical illustration which renders them hardly less attractive to the historical student than to the budding diplomatist.

This is even more strikingly the case in the second volume, which deals with congresses and conferences, treaties and other international compacts, 'good offices' and mediation. Here, too, the method is analytical rather than historical, but the subject-matter is presented in a form which will make the book an exceedingly valuable, if not an indispensable, adjunct to the study of European history during the last three centuries. For erudition, conspicuous and profound, has not converted Sir E. Satow into a dry-as-dust, and he combines weight of

[1] Two volumes. Longmans, 1917.

learning with a skill in exposition which will gain for his words an audience far beyond the circles of professed diplomatists.

Another work, recently completed, is Mr. D. J. Hill's *History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe*.[1] Mr. Hill, like Sir E. Satow, has won distinction both as a scholar and as a diplomatist, but his work is planned on lines quite distinct from those followed by the latter author. As is clearly implied in the title, his book is historical rather than uridical. A history of diplomacy, as the author justly insists, properly includes 'not only an account of the progress of nternational intercourse, but an exposition of the motives by which it has been inspired and the results which it has accomplished'. More even than that; it must include also 'a consideration of the genesis of the entire international system and of its progress through the progressive stages of its development'.

What is the scientific *terminus a quo* of such an inquiry? 'It is customary', writes Mr. Hill, 'to regard the Congress and Peace of Westphalia as the starting-point of European diplomacy, but this is principally due to the fact that so little has been known of earlier diplomatic activity.' That may be so. But the customary practice has something, as will be argued presently, to recommend it. Moreover, it is worthy of notice that Mr. Hill sets out to write a history of diplomacy in the international development of Europe. It is, therefore, pertinent to inquire where the international development begins. Can it begin before the development of the Nation-State? By implication Mr. Hill answers this question with an emphatic affirmative. The first of his three substantial volumes starts with an analysis of the condition of Europe under the Roman Empire; it carries us on to the revival of the Empire in the West, to the dismemberment of the Carolingian Empire, and to the Holy Roman Empire of medieval times. He then traces the conflict of the Empire and the Papacy, and so brings us to the development of Italian diplomacy. The real genesis of modern diplomacy he finds in the City-State system of medieval Italy.

[1] Three volumes. Longmans, 1905–14.

'A little world by itself, whose component parts were numerous, feeble and hostile, Italy soon created an organism to take the place which the Empire had left vacant. To know the intentions of one's neighbour, to defeat his hostile designs, to form alliances with his enemies, to steal away his friends and prevent his union with others—became matters of the highest public interest. . . . The system long in use by Venice was now applied by every Italian State . . . but Venice continued to be the school and touchstone of ambassadors' (i. 359).

From the development of Italian diplomacy, Mr. Hill passes to the rise of national monarchies, and thence to the formation of modern States. With the gradual absorption of the great feudal duchies, the expulsion of the English from France, the overthrow of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, and the unification of France under Louis XI and Charles VIII, we reach by general consent the dawn of the modern era. May not this be regarded as the true *terminus a quo* for a history of European diplomacy, for the study of international relations? Mr. Hill repudiates the suggestion with scorn:

'The essence of diplomacy does not lie in the character of its organs or its forms of procedure. Intrinsically it is an appeal to ideas and principles rather than to force, and may assume a great variety of specific embodiments. . . . What is to be said of the Italian cities winning their local liberties from the greatest emperors of the Middle Ages by means of their leagues and alliances? And what of the Republic of Venice, in particular, situated between powers of overwhelming magnitude, yet not only maintaining from the beginning its virtual independence but acquiring by its compacts a vast colonial dominion from the spoils of the Eastern Empire? If these were not feats of diplomacy, in what age shall we expect to find them? . . . The importance of that period both for the international development of Europe and for the part played in it by diplomacy cannot be over-estimated. In it were elaborated and set in motion ideas and influences that have never ceased to affect the destinies of Europe' (II, pp. vi, vii).

All this is, in one sense, true to the verge of truism. But it is true only if we are prepared to give to the terms 'diplomacy' and 'international' a somewhat elastic and non-technical connotation. The question as to the proper and

precise connotation of those terms is one which must presently engage attention. Well before the end of the second volume, which closes with the Treaties of Westphalia (1648), we are launched upon the period when those terms may, beyond dispute, be appropriately employed. But to that period we shall revert.

To his third volume, published in 1914, Mr. Hill gives a sub-title: 'The Diplomacy of the Age of Absolutism.' He prefaces the volume by a statement which seems strangely self-contradictory, though not un-characteristic of the author.

'Men', he writes, 'had sought refuge from anarchy by establishing the supremacy of the State and concentrating power in the hands of a few. We behold entire nations moving *en masse* in directions not determined by their needs or their individual desires, nor yet in view of their well-being, but by the command of one man who—for reasons of his own, for which he had to give no account—acted as he saw fit.' . . . 'Yet it is impossible to explain this period in terms of individual action . . . it was the thought and feeling of the time that made monarchy absolute' (III, p. v).

Precisely. Power was committed to a ruler, virtually dictatorial, in order, on the one hand, to rescue the adolescent Nation-State from feudal anarchy, and on the other to achieve territorial readjustments which, if not 'determined by national needs', or conceived in the national interests, were distinctly so regarded by the mass of the nation. M. Albert Sorel cannot be described as an adulator of absolutism, but what says he of that traditional foreign policy of which the absolute monarchs of France were conspicuous exponents?

'La politique française avait été dessinée par la géographie: l'instinct national la suggéra avant que la raison d'état la conseillât. Elle se fonde sur un fait: l'empire de Charlemagne. Le point de départ de ce grand procès qui occupe toute l'histoire de France c'est l'insoluble litige de la succession de l'Empereur . . . à mesure que le temps s'éloigne l'image du grand Empereur s'élève et prend des proportions colossales. De Philippe-Auguste à Napoléon elle plane sur l'histoire de France.'

This is the truly philosophical view of a great historical

tradition; but M. Sorel does but re-echo the language of Richelieu himself:

'Le but de mon ministère a été de rendre à la Gaule les frontières que lui a destinées la Nature, de rendre aux Gaulois un roi gaulois, de confondre la Gaule avec la France et partout où fut l'ancienne Gaule d'y rétablir la nouvelle.'

It is perfectly true that the time came when Louis XIV, in the vain pursuit of dynastic ambitions, transgressed the limits suggested by geography, and departed from the policy hallowed by tradition; but it is useless to ignore the fact that up to a point the policy of the absolute monarchy was not one whit less national than that pursued by the statesmen of the First or the Third Republic. The doctrine of 'Les Limites naturelles', the idea that the national frontiers of France were marked by the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, has profoundly and continuously influenced the diplomacy of France, whether the agents of that diplomacy received their instructions from a Bourbon, a Buonaparte, or a servant of the Republic. A parliamentary minister is not necessarily a more faithful interpreter of the national will than an 'absolute' monarch, as an historian like Mr. Hill ought to have perceived. Alsace and Lorraine were acquired for France at the zenith of the Bourbon monarchy. Did the First or the Second Republic ever show the least disposition to restore those provinces? The United Provinces, under the Dutch Republic, pursued their colonial ambitions with at least as much eagerness as Spain under Charles V or Philip II. Dynastic motives do not account for national policy consistently pursued under varying political conditions. But we need not go abroad to find illustrations of so obvious a truth. No country in Europe has been less influenced, in its foreign policy, by the individual desires of an absolute monarch than Great Britain; yet no country has pursued certain ends with greater persistence or more undeviating consistency.

Mr. Hill's argument would seem, therefore, to be somewhat vitiated by a prejudice, not to be expected in a philosophical historian, against the 'enlightened despots' of the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries. Yet the point must not be pressed against him too far, nor does the defect, if such it be, seriously detract from the value of a work which is conceived on original lines and is executed, in the main, with conspicuous skill. His erudition is undeniable, his style lucid and attractive, while the general treatment of an important theme is full without being prolix, and scholarly without being dull. The method and plan which he has chosen to adopt raise, however, a large question of historical principle into the discussion of which, interesting though it be, we must not, for the moment, be beguiled.

The purpose which inspires this chapter is a different one. It is to consider how far the recent publication of works such as these may be held to betoken an awakened interest, on the part of the English public, in the machinery and methods of diplomacy, and in the problems with the solution of which diplomacy is concerned. The interest, if awakened, is unquestionably recent and tardy. Yet one point should not be ignored. Diplomacy, as now understood, is itself a relatively new development; international relations are, in an historic sense, a thing of yesterday. The word 'diplomacy' is said to have been first employed, in its modern signification, by Edmund Burke towards the end of the eighteenth century. The system itself—'a uniform system based upon generally recognized rules and directed by a diplomatic hierarchy having a fixed international status'—was finally established, according to Mr. Alison Phillips, 'only at the Congresses of Vienna (1815) and Aix-la-Chapelle (1818)'.[1] Even if we accept the wider definition or description preferred and adopted by Mr. Hill, and take 'diplomacy' to be synonymous with international relations, it is difficult to assign its genesis to a period earlier than the close of the fifteenth century. Before that time we look in vain for the Nation-States, between whom mutual relations were possible. Not until then did Europe really begin to emancipate itself from the grip of the legacy bequeathed to it by the world-empire of Rome. The Roman Empire had long since passed away, but for

[1] *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th edition), art. 'Diplomacy'.

a thousand years after its passing Europe continued to be dominated by the institutions which arose out of its ashes. The Empire of the Caesars bequeathed to the world the idea of a World-State, the idea of a Catholic Church, and a system of land-tenure which ultimately developed into one of the most powerful principles of government and society which has ever impressed itself upon mankind—the relation of lordship and vassaldom, a political, social, and personal nexus based upon the tenure and cultivation of land. The Holy Catholic Church, the Holy Roman Empire, the feudal system—these were the institutions, these furnished the ideas and principles which dominated European society from the overthrow of the Caesarean Empire down to the new birth of learning and the Protestant Reformation.

The system reared upon these foundations never extended in its integrity beyond the continent of Europe. England always occupied, in this, as in other respects, an exceptional position. Even a Saxon king claimed to be *alterius orbis imperator*; many archbishops of Canterbury were in effect *alterius orbis Papae*; while feudalism, though fully developed in the hands of the Norman lawyers into a coherent system of land tenure, was firmly repudiated, alike by the Norman and the Angevin kings, as a method of government. England, therefore, stood from the first outside the unified and unifying influence which, throughout the Middle Ages, moulded the life and decided the destinies of her continental neighbours. To this, among other reasons, must be attributed the 'precocious sense' of national identity and national unity which, in the view of foreign commentators upon English institutions, was the most characteristic and differentiating feature of medieval England. The people of this country attained nationhood at least three centuries before the people of any other country in western Europe. But as it takes two people to make a quarrel, so it seems to demand at least two nations to render possible an 'international' system. So long as the Empire and the Papacy retained any real political effectiveness the modern States-system could be nothing more than embryonic.

By the end of the fifteenth century, however, the principle of Nationality was making rapid progress in two at least of the great States of western Europe, France and Spain. In France unity was gradually achieved through the convergent operation of various forces. First and most important was the growing strength of the Crown. The monarchy made France. Out of a loosely-compacted bundle of feudal duchies and counties the Crown created a compact, coherent, and centralized State. The Crown was powerfully assisted in the completion of its task on the one hand by its alliance with the Church; on the other, by the development of a system of law and of legal procedure based upon the Justinian code. Of that legal system the Parlement of Paris was the focus and centre, and it would be difficult to over-estimate the part played in the unification of France by this great judicial institution. Hardly less important, in the long run, was the prolonged contest with England, known as the 'Hundred Years' War'. That war inflicted upon France indescribable sufferings, but by the time it was ended France was all but made. The contest with Charles the Bold of Burgundy continued and almost completed the process after the victory of Louis XI. Brittany alone of all the great duchies of medieval France remained independent, and in 1491, by the marriage of the young Duchess Anne with Charles VIII of France, Brittany was absorbed into the kingdom. At last France was able to take its place in the European polity as a Nation-State.

If medieval France was a bundle of feudal duchies and counties, medieval Spain was a congeries of kingdoms. What the Hundred Years' War did for France was done for Spain by the secular crusade against the Moors. The gradual absoption of the smaller kingdoms by the monarchies of Aragon and Castile, the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon with Isabella of Castile, the final expulsion of the Moors, and the conquest of Granada practically completed the consolidation of the peninsula, and in 1516 Charles I (afterwards the Emperor Charles V) succeeded to a united Crown.

The unification—substantially simultaneous—of the French and Spanish kingdoms announced to Europe the passing of the centralized system of the Middle Ages, and the advent of a new era, distinguished by the emergence of a number of Nation-States, and by the recognition of their complete independence. The new era dawned at the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century; the process was not completed until nearly the end of the nineteenth. Not until the decade 1870–80 was continental Europe exhaustively parcelled out among independent States, based for the most part upon the recognition of the national idea. France, Spain, and the United Provinces emerged as Nation-States in the course of the sixteenth century; modern 'Austria' came to the birth with the virtual death of the medieval Empire at the Treaty of Westphalia (1648); a unified and self-conscious Russia was brought into being by the genius of Peter the Great, early in the eighteenth century; the birth of Prussia, due to the industry and persistence of the Hohenzollern Electors of Brandenburg, was almost coincident with that of Russia. But the rapid multiplication of Nation-States came only with the nineteenth century. Belgium as a Nation-State dates from 1830; Greece from the same time; while the Balkan States, Roumania, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro, gradually re-emerged from the superimposed dominion of the Ottoman Empire between 1859 and 1878. From the same period must be dated the birth of still greater Nation-States. The Italian *Risorgimento*, originating, as Mazzini admitted, in the Napoleonic occupation, stimulated by the sporadic revolutions of 1848, helped on, a further stage, by the calculating intervention of Napoleon III in 1859, brought near to fruition by the wise statesmanship and adroit diplomacy of Cavour and Victor Emmanuel, finally attained its zenith in 1870–1. In the same year, Bismarck, with the help of Roon and Moltke, completed the fabric of a united Germany.

This catalogic summary may suffice to suggest that the European polity, regarded as a congeries of independent Nation-States, is the resultant of an evolutionary process of

relatively recent date. Nor has that process escaped serious criticism directed against it from widely divergent standpoints. An eminent Roman Catholic historian and a distinguished philosopher come curiously close together, both in their condemnation of the existing polity, and in their analysis of its genesis. 'The thing which at Münster and Osnabrück' [the settlement effected by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648] 'stereotyped itself in the world's history was', writes Father William Barry, 'a world's catastrophe—the break-up of Christendom.'[1] That a Roman Catholic divine should regard the Protestant Reformation as responsible for the dissipation of European harmony and the inauguration of European anarchy is natural enough. The Holy Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire did give to medieval Europe, as we have seen, a semblance of unity. That the philosophical publicist should re-echo the lament and reinforce the argument is more remarkable. 'In the great and tragic history of Europe there is', writes Mr. Lowes Dickinson, 'a turning-point that marks the defeat of the ideal of a world order and the definite acceptance of international anarchy. That turning-point is the emergence of the sovereign State at the end of the fifteenth century.'[2] There is, of course, a sense in which the propositions advanced by Father Barry and Mr. Dickinson are indisputably true.

We must, however, guard ourselves against a further assumption common to both writers: that the prevailing 'anarchy' has been responsible for modern wars. It is true that in the Middle Ages there is a notable absence of 'international' war. Equally notable, however, is the absence of 'international' trade, of 'international' diplomacy, of 'international' law. There was no 'internationalism' for the simple and sufficient reason that there were no nations: that continental Europe consisted, as Bishop Stubbs was wont to say, of 'great bundles of States', not of compact and consolidated kingdoms. But if wars on the modern scale were happily unknown there was plenty of fighting on a small scale: between noble and noble;

[1] *The World's Debate*, p. 17.
[2] G. L. Dickinson, *The European Anarchy*, p. 9.

between town and town; between district and district; and to the individual who is called upon to sacrifice life or limb it matters little whether he is a unit in an army of five millions or in a levy of five hundred. The absence of international war did not, then, imply the prevalence of peace. Yet that is the implication of the argument contained in passages of which the following is a sample:

'There was a time', writes Mr. Dickinson, 'when the whole civilized world of the West lay at peace under a single ruler; when the idea of separate Sovereign States always at war or in armed peace, would have seemed as monstrous and absurd as it now seems inevitable, and that great achievement of the Roman Empire left, when it sank, a sunset glow over the turmoil of the Middle Ages. Never would a medieval churchman or statesman have admitted that the independence of States was an ideal. It was an obstinate tendency, struggling into existence against all the preconceptions and beliefs of the time.

'One Church, one Empire, was the ideal of Charlemagne, of Otto, of Barbarossa, of Hildebrand, of Thomas Aquinas, of Dante. The forces struggling against that ideal were the enemy to be defeated. They won. And thought, always parasitic on action, endorsed the victory. So that now there is hardly a philosopher or historian who does not urge that the sovereignty of independent States is the last word of political fact, political wisdom.'[1]

How far this statement is consistent with the same writer's 'noble ideal of free and progressive personality', and with his passionate demand for the preservation and multiplication of small nations, are questions which may not detain us. But this exaltation of the Middle Ages, however natural to a Roman Catholic historian, is passing strange in the mouth of the modern pacificist. Despite the periodic recurrence of great international conflicts, no one with any sense of historical perspective can seriously suggest that in the life of the average citizen fighting plays as large a part to-day as it did in the period over which the Roman Empire cast a 'sunset glow'.

Nevertheless, the argument advanced by such writers as

[1] G. L. Dickinson, *After the War*, pp. 20, 21.

Father Barry and Mr. Dickinson is not merely true but truistic. It was, as they insist, the dissolution of the medieval Empire and the circumscription of the authority of the medieval Church that permitted the emergence of the modern States-system which has formed the basis of the European polity from the sixteenth century onwards.

In this new order of things modern diplomacy had its genesis. In the Middle Ages there had been much coming and going of special envoys on special missions, but a permanent embassy in a foreign State—apart, of course, from the Legatine system of the Papacy—was a thing unknown to medieval Europe; only gradually was the diplomatic system, as we know it, defined and elaborated. Hardly, however, had the old landmarks disappeared and the new States-system begun to emerge, before men set themselves to devise a new machinery for the regulation of international intercourse. Throughout the greater part of the sixteenth century Habsburg and Valois strove in internecine rivalry. Borrowing an idea familiar to medieval Italy, a distracted Europe sought deliverance from this condition of almost perpetual warfare in the development of the idea of an equilibrium between the greater Powers. But the equilibrium proved to be singularly unstable, and the more enlightened statesmen sought more satisfactory and permanent solutions than that afforded by the balance of power. In this quest the 'Great Design' of Henri IV had its genesis. That 'Design', as a disciple has insisted, 'is the first indication of an Occidental as opposed to a purely national policy which had been seen since the days of the Crusades. Utopian in detail, but profoundly true in principle, the scheme of Henri IV boldly put forward the conceptions, so startling for that age, of western Europe as a peaceful confederacy of free states; of a common council to arbitrate in international disputes; of mutual toleration for the three recognized sects—Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist; and thus of the removal of any future cause for European war. It is particularly to be noted that the map of Europe, as he planned it, included not the slightest augmentation of French territory. 'His intention',

says Sully,[1] 'was voluntarily and for ever to relinquish all power of augmenting his dominions; not only by conquest but by all other just and lawful means. By this he would have discovered the secret to convince all his neighbours that his whole design was to save both himself and them those immense sums which the maintenance of so many thousand soldiers, so many fortified places, and so many military expenses require; to free them for ever from the fear of those bloody catastrophes so common in Europe; to procure them an uninterrupted repose; and finally to unite them all in an indissoluble bond of security and friendship.'[2] Europe was to consist of a Christian Commonwealth composed of fifteen confederate States, Protestant and Catholic, republican and monarchical, elective and hereditary. The affairs of the Commonwealth were to be administered by a perpetual Senate, renewable every three years and presided over by the Emperor. This Senate or Council was to consist of sixty-four plenipotentiaries representing the component States, and was to be competent to decide all disputes arising between the several Powers, and to determine any questions of common import. 'It is', says a modern historian, 'on this Grand Design that all other projects of peace, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, are based—from that which Emeric Crucé gave to the world under the title of *Le nouveau Cynée*, two years before Grotius published his *De Iure belli et pacis* to the latest programme of the modern Peace Societies.'[3]

Whether this ambitious and resounding project was seriously devised by its author, or whether it was merely the diversion of an idle hour, is a question which need not detain us. Two things in regard to it are certain: first, that its immediate effect was nil, and, second, that seriously projected or no, its promulgation at least testifies to the embarrassments into which Europe had been plunged by the dissolution of the

[1] It need hardly be said that modern criticism attributes the 'design' not to Henri IV but to his minister Sully. The latter attributed the original suggestion to Queen Elizabeth.

[2] J. H. Bridges, *France under Richelieu and Colbert*, pp. 109, 110.

[3] W. Alison Phillips, *Confederation of Europe*, p. 19.

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older unities and the development of international rivalries and antagonisms.

Further evidence of the crying need of the day is furnished by the efforts of Hugo Grotius to establish, on the basis of a *Ius Naturae*, a system of International Law. The great work of Grotius, *De Iure belli et pacis*, was written while the author was an exile in France, in 1625. Oppressed by the recent memory of the civil wars in France and Germany; of the bloody contest between the United Netherlands and Spain; confronted by the desolation and misery wrought by the Thirty Years' War in Germany, the Dutch jurist might well come to the conclusion that the break-up of the medieval unities had dissolved Europe in perpetual anarchy. The work of Grotius has had a profound influence upon the thought and indeed upon the practice of modern Europe. He may be said, without exaggeration, to have founded a new science. Sir James Mackintosh goes so far as to affirm that Grotius 'produced a work which we may now, indeed, justly deem imperfect, but which is perhaps the most complete that the world has yet owed, at so early a stage in the progress of any science, to the genius and learning of one man'.[1] The measure of practical success achieved by Grotius, although not answerable to his hopes, has, of course, been incomparably greater than that of Sully and Henri IV: but the lack of any material sanction still impedes progress, and recent events have, for the moment at any rate, flung the world back into that state of nature wherein, as Hobbes taught us, 'force and fraud are the two cardinal virtues' and the life of man is 'nasty, brutish and short'.

Hobbes, as we have seen, sought in the conclusion of a mutual compact a way of escape from intolerable domestic disorder; others were looking for a means of ending a condition of anarchy in the community of nations. During the latter half of the seventeenth century the arch-disturber of the peace of Europe was Louis XIV of France, and it was during the devastating wars initiated by him that William Penn published his *Essay towards the Present and Future Peace*

[1] *Miscellaneous Works*, i. 351.

of Europe (1693), in which he suggested the setting up of an international court of arbitration. Penn's principles bore good fruit in his famous colony in North America, but in Europe they produced little immediate result.

Far more important was the work of the well-known French writer Charles Irénée Castel, Abbé de Saint-Pierre. The Abbé de Saint-Pierre was secretary to the Abbé de Polignac when he acted as French plenipotentiary in the negotiations which preceded the conclusion of the Peace of Utrecht, and it was at Utrecht that the Abbé de Saint-Pierre published, in 1713, his famous *Projet de traité pour rendre la paix perpétuelle*.[1]

It was by the Abbé de Saint-Pierre that the 'problem of perpetual peace was fairly introduced into political literature'.[2] Like Henri the Fourth, the Abbé proposed to establish a Confederation of Europe, based upon a perpetual and irrevocable alliance between the Sovereigns. The organ of the Confederation was to be a Congress to which each Sovereign was to send plenipotentiaries, and it was to control a common fund. The Congress was to define the cases which would involve offending States being put under the ban of Europe, and the Powers were to enter into a mutual compact to take common action against any State thus banned, until the offender should have submitted to the common will. Like similar projects, that of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre excited the contempt of the cynics, and was disregarded by the 'men of affairs'. But we cannot fail to be struck by the fact, as an able commentator points out, that there is scarcely one of the provisions of this remarkable project which 'does not emerge at least as a subject of debate among the Powers during the years of European reconstruction after 1814'.[3] It is safe to assume that they will re-emerge after the close of the present War.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century there came an

[1] Cf. Siégler Pascal, *Un Contemporain égaré au xviii^e siècle. Les Projets de l'abbé de Saint-Pierre, 1658–1743* (Paris, 1900), and A. Phillips, *The Confederation of Europe*.

[2] M. C. Smith, Preface to Kant's *Perpetual Peace*, p. 30.

[3] A. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

echo to the Abbé's *Projet* from the other side of the Rhine. In 1795 there was published Immanuel Kant's famous essay on *Perpetual Peace*—an essay in which, in the view of a discriminating critic,[1] 'we catch the highest notes ever struck by a German publicist'. Unlike Rousseau, Kant was under no illusion as to a golden age of peace from which man has progressively degenerated.

'A state of peace among men who live side by side is not the natural state (*status naturalis*), which is rather to be described as a state of war: . . . Thus the state of peace must be *established*. For the mere cessation of hostilities is no guarantee of continued peaceful relations, and unless this guarantee is given by every individual to his neighbour—which can only be done in a state of society regulated by law—one man is at liberty to challenge another and treat him as an enemy.'[2]

How, then, is peace to be *established*? Kant lays down what he describes as two 'definitive articles of Perpetual Peace'. The first is that 'the civil constitution of each State should be republican'. The 'republic' was not necessarily to be democratic, it might be monarchical in form, but the essential point was that it should be 'representative'. 'The form of government,' he writes, 'if it is to be in accordance with the idea of right, must embody the representative system, in which alone a republican form of government is possible, and without which it is despotic and violent, be the constitution what it may.'

The second 'definitive article' is that 'the law of nations should be founded on a federation of free States'. Kant repudiated, therefore, the idea of a universal empire such as that to which the argument of the *De Monarchia* had seemed to point. 'It is', he writes, 'the desire of every State, or of its ruler, to attain to a permanent condition of peace in this very way; that is to say, by subjecting the whole world as far as possible to its sway. But Nature wills it otherwise. Nature brings about union not by the weakening of competitive forces, but through the equilibrium of these forces in

[1] Mr. G. P. Gooch.
[2] Eng. Trans., p. 119.

their most active rivalry.' To examine Kant's argument in detail would be beyond the scope of the present chapter.[1] It must suffice to have indicated thus briefly his place in the development of the 'international' idea.

When Kant published his *Perpetual Peace* Europe was in the third year of a war destined to last for another twenty years. Nine years later the Tsar Alexander I dispatched his friend Nikolai Nikolaievich Novosiltsov on a special mission to England to lay before Pitt the Tsar's scheme for the reconstitution of the European policy upon the lines of a great Christian republic. The ideas then adumbrated subsequently took practical shape in the 'Holy Alliance'. The history of that famous experiment in the organization of peace will form the subject of a later chapter.

This brief reference to a remarkable succession of 'peace projects' will sufficiently indicate the dissatisfaction with which the existing system was regarded alike by thinkers and by practical politicians. But diplomacy was not, as is too frequently assumed, the cause of the prevailing 'anarchy', but the consequence of it. Nay more, it was an attempt to mitigate the inconveniences which resulted from the dissolution of the medieval unities. Yet from the first it was regarded with suspicion. 'An ambassador', according to the jocose definition of Sir Henry Wotton, 'is an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country.' If for 'good' we might read 'destruction', the definition would command wide and serious acceptance among a large number of latter-day pacificists.

Diplomacy, and particularly 'secret diplomacy', has come in for hard knocks of late. It would be impossible within the prescribed limits of this chapter to attempt any vindication of its methods, or to estimate the results of its activities, even were the materials available. For reasons already indicated, the materials are not available, nor, unless the legal custodians

[1] A critical analysis of Kant's argument will be found prefaced to the English translation by Miss M. C. Smith. It is not without significance that a reprint of this translation should have been recently published (Allen & Unwin, 1915).

of our State Papers can be induced to offer more generous opportunities to responsible students of recent history, are they likely to be. In the absence of materials the prosecution and the defence are alike at a disadvantage. Something may be learnt from memoirs, biographical or autobiographical, such as those of Sir Robert Morier, Sir Horace Rumbold, Lord Redesdale, and Lord Lyons, but much of the evidence derived from such sources is necessarily *ex parte*, and accusation and apology must therefore be based largely upon conjecture. If, however, it is permissible, in the absence of any possibility of definite proof, to hazard a conjecture, it would be in the direction that 'diplomacy' has done infinitely more to preserve peace and to retard the advent of war than many of its more vociferous critics would be disposed to allow. Lord Cromer once confessed that what he most feared during his reign in Egypt,

'was not deliberate action taken by the diplomacy of any nation, but rather the occurrence of some chance incident which would excite a whirlwind of national passion, and which, being possibly manipulated by some skilful journalist who would focus on one point all the latent hysteria in France or England, would create a situation incapable of being controlled by diplomacy'.[1]

Lord Cromer may not as a critic have been in a position of complete detachment, but few men were better qualified to form a judgement, and none was more honest in expressing a judgment when formed. Diplomacy was, in his view, the handmaid of peace; war the confession of failure. It is true that recent revelations have lent colour to the views popularized by Mr. Norman Angell as to the mischievous machinations of 'war-lords and diplomats'; but the depravity of individuals does not involve the condemnation of a system. 'Diplomacy' may be blameless, though the diplomatist be guilty. In any case, if the argument attempted in the foregoing pages be sound, diplomacy is the necessary concomitant of that States-system which has characterized and dominated the European polity for the last four hundred years. Is that system destined to pass and to give place to a new order? and if so, on what

[1] *Political and Literary Essays* (Second Series), p. 290.

lines is the reconstruction of Europe likely to take place? Are we to look to a revival of the oecumenical order of the Middle Ages, to the realization of Dante's dream of a world-State under a world-emperor? Such was unquestionably the vision which floated before the eyes of some of the most gifted sons of Germany when the German nation, with their Kaiser at their head, plunged the world into the cataclysm of war. The omens to-day do not seem favourable to this solution of the problem.

Must we, then, look for a solution to some modification of the schemes which, ever since the modern States-system emerged, have appeared to offer some softening of the asperities, some escape from the recurrent catastrophes which quickly revealed themselves as inherent in the new order? Shall we, like Dr. C. W. Eliot,[1] the venerable and venerated ex-President of Harvard, look to the realization of the scheme which, in one form or another, commended itself to the political idealism of Henri IV, to the piety and benevolence of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, to the calm and detached reason of Immanuel Kant? Is security and stability to be found in the foundation of a League of Nations, equipped with a complete apparatus of international federalism? These are large questions; they are naturally suggested by a review, however summary, of the history of European diplomacy, and they are likely to force themselves with ever-increasing insistence upon a world which for some years has been face to face with all the hitherto unimaginable horrors of modern warfare. To some of them it may be possible to attempt an answer in a later chapter. It must, for the present, suffice to have indicated the genesis of the problem by which Europe and the world are confronted.

[1] *The Road to Peace* (Constable & Co., 1915).

CHAPTER III

ENGLAND AND EUROPE

A Chapter of English Diplomacy, 1853–71

The origins of modern diplomacy and the emergence of the modern States-system were briefly indicated in the preceding chapter. In the course of the last three centuries the greater European Powers have gradually evolved a more or less traditional theory of international relations and a more or less consistent practice in foreign policy, but neither in the theory nor in the practice have our own countrymen shown themselves gravely concerned.

Few Englishmen, it is commonly and truly said, take a sustained and continuous interest in foreign affairs. Fewer still make any serious study of the subject. When a war breaks out or a crisis threatens, people who like to be regarded as well informed make a scrambling effort to 'get up' the points at issue, and amid a shoal of minnows they promptly pose as authoritative whales. But not outside the ranks of professional publicists and politicians, nor always perhaps within them, is there any systematic and scientific investigation of the difficult and devious ways of European diplomacy. To this rule the world of high finance is, of course, an exception; that world, however, is not English but cosmopolitan.

For this characteristic ignorance and indifference many reasons may be alleged. Owing to their insular detachment, Englishmen, it is said, have less need than their neighbours to concern themselves with international rivalries and with the conflicting ambitions of continental States. Besides, questions of domestic policy are peculiarly absorbing in this country; earlier than any other nation in Europe or in the world, we were called upon to confront the social and economic problems

roused into fresh life, if not actually created, by the industrial revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There is substance in both these excuses or explanations; and there is even more in a third. People who take a somewhat wider view of their political responsibility are apt to allege that the true ambit of the external interests of Great Britain cannot be confined within the limits of European diplomacy; that, in Seeley's famous phrase, they are not thalassic but oceanic; that they touch Asia, Africa, and America more continuously and more intimately than Europe; in short, that to the citizen of a world-wide Empire the affairs of Europe are of secondary, if not negligible, significance.

This latter view represents a welcome and wholesome recoil against the confined outlook which was characteristic of the statesmen and not less of the historians of the middle decades of the nineteenth century; and it contains, beyond question, a large element of truth. But another reaction is already in sight. Proper as it is to endeavour to appreciate the unique position of Great Britain in world-politics, it is not less important to understand that, despite reflex action at the extremities, the nerve centres are still mainly concentrated in Europe. Not less, therefore, to the student of *Weltpolitik* than to the diplomatist of the older school is a knowledge of *les mœurs politiques*—the traditions of the European courts and chancelleries—indispensable.

To such knowledge there have lately been made several notable contributions.[1] Mrs. Rosslyn Wemyss has given us the *Memoirs and Letters* of her distinguished father Sir Robert Morier,[2] a work which is already recognized as not only indispensable to a knowledge of Anglo-German relations in the middle years of the last century, but of great value to the student of modern German history. Lord Clarendon has found a most sympathetic biographer in Sir Herbert Maxwell,[3] while the work of Lord Lyons has

[1] Written in 1914. The remarkable *Memories* of Lord Redesdale had not then appeared.

[2] Edward Arnold, 1911.

[3] *The Life and Letters of the fourth Earl of Clarendon*, by Sir Herbert Maxwell (Arnold, 1913).

been described in a work of real distinction by Lord Newton.[1] Lord Clarendon, Sir Robert Morier, and Lord Lyons each played a notable part on the stage of European politics during the mid-Victorian era. But the scenes of their activities were far apart. Lord Clarendon, though not without personal experience of continental missions, spent most of his political life at the Foreign Office; Morier's experience was gained almost wholly in Germany; Lord Lyons's principal work was done in Washington and in Paris.

Sir Herbert Maxwell's biography of Lord Clarendon, though not quite void of offence as regards the colleagues and contemporaries of his subject, is eminently satisfactory as a portrait of the central figure of the tale. To make that figure singularly attractive was not indeed a difficult task. Lord Clarendon was happy in the possession of high intellectual gifts, happier still in the affection of many friends, and happiest in his own sunny temper and in a character honourable and sincere. His mission in life was peacemaking—in the family circle, in his party, in continental diplomacy.

Born in 1800, George William Frederick Villiers entered the diplomatic service in 1820. Recalled from Petersburg in 1823 to become Commissioner of Customs, he was sent to Paris in 1831 by Lord Althorp, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, to negotiate a commercial treaty with France. Two years later Lord Palmerston appointed him Minister to Madrid, and there he remained until 1839. In 1838 he had succeeded his uncle as fourth Earl of Clarendon, and he desired to settle down at home. In 1839 he married, refused the Governor-Generalship of Canada, and was admitted to the Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal. He went out with his party in 1841; came in again in 1846 as President of the Board of Trade, and in 1847 became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. As Lord Lieutenant, Clarendon was responsible for rescuing from famine a starving people, for quelling the 'Young Ireland' rebellion, and for passing the well-intentioned but disastrous Encumbered Estates Act of 1849. In the latter year he played host to Queen

[1] *Lord Lyons: A Record of British Diplomacy*, by Lord Newton (Arnold, 1913).

Victoria and Prince Albert. When Lord Palmerston was dismissed from the Foreign Office in 1851, it was regarded as certain that Lord Clarendon would succeed him, but the latter, always generous and complaisant, waived his strong claims in favour of Lord Granville. Two years later, however, Lord John Russell, who had temporarily taken the Foreign Office under Lord Aberdeen, relinquished it to Lord Clarendon. The latter, therefore, was responsible for the negotiations which preceded the outbreak of the Crimean War. At the Foreign Office he remained during the rest of Lord Aberdeen's premiership and throughout Lord Palmerston's first administration, 1853–8. Lord Derby pressed him to retain office when the Conservatives came into power in 1858, but he refused with some acerbity, and when, in 1859, Lord Palmerston formed his second Cabinet, Lord John Russell, to the annoyance of the Queen, insisted on having the Foreign Office for himself. Lord Clarendon, however, continued, though unofficially, to exercise much influence in foreign affairs until the way was reopened to the Foreign Office by Lord Russell's accession to the premiership (1865). Except during the interval of the Derby-Disraeli Government (1866–8), Clarendon presided over the Foreign Office until his death, in 1870.

Sir Robert Morier's diplomatic service in Germany coincided almost precisely with Lord Clarendon's successive periods at the Foreign Office. Appointed to the Vienna Embassy as unpaid attaché in 1853, Morier served at Berlin, at Frankfort, at Darmstadt, at Stuttgart, and at Munich, until, in 1876, he finally quitted Germany for Portugal.

In the same year (1853) that Morier embarked upon a diplomatic career in Germany, Lyons was entrusted with an important and semi-independent mission to Rome, and remained in Italy until 1858. From 1859 to 1865 he served as Minister at Washington; he was transferred to the Embassy at Constantinople in 1865, and then as ambassador at Paris (1867–87) he witnessed the outbreak of the Franco-German War, the fall of the Second Empire, and the establishment of the Third Republic.

It will be observed that the public careers of these three

men—Clarendon, Morier, and Lyons—are curiously complementary, and that in the aggregate they contribute an important chapter to the history of English diplomacy. To gauge the significance of that chapter is the purpose of the pages that follow.

What was the diplomatic situation when, in 1853, Morier went to Vienna, Lyons to Rome, and Clarendon took up the reins at the Foreign Office? The peace of Europe trembled at that moment in the balance. Napoleon III—the designing villain of Kinglake's brilliant melodrama—had but lately (December 1852) made himself Emperor of the French, and by the other crowned heads of Europe was regarded as little better than a successful *parvenu*. While still President of the Republic, Napoleon had made a bid for clerical support in France and for the favour of the Catholic Powers by reasserting the claims of the Latin Church to the guardianship of the Holy Places in Palestine. Such reassertion naturally brought Napoleon into collision with the Tsar Nicholas—the protector of the Greek monks then in possession. But to fix upon Napoleon exclusive or indeed primary responsibility for the outbreak of the Crimean War seems to ignore the operation of other forces which, if more remote, were not less potent. A study of *les mœurs politiques* reveals the fact that ever since the Treaty of Kainardji (1774) the Russian Tsars had been aiming at a virtual protectorate over the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Sultan. To the Tsar Nicholas it seemed that in 1853 the opportunity had arrived for the final assertion of this claim. It is but fair to say that before taking overt action the Tsar attempted, not for the first time, to come to a frank understanding with Great Britain in regard to the Eastern Question. When visiting England in 1844, he had opened his mind on the subject to Lord Aberdeen, then at the Foreign Office, to Peel, and above all to the Prince Consort. He had then insisted that 'in the event of any unforeseen calamity befalling the Turkish Empire, Russia and England should agree together as to the course that should be pursued'. These overtures were resumed at Petersburg in January 1853.

In two memorable interviews with Sir Hamilton Seymour the Tsar, after a general survey of the Eastern Question, made certain specific suggestions for its solution. He proposed that the Danubian Principalities, Serbia, and Bulgaria should be erected into independent States under Russian protection, and that England, in order to make absolutely secure her route to the Far East, should annex Crete, Cyprus, and Egypt. The English Ministers, who had been captivated by the personality of the Tsar in 1844, were aghast at the coolness and candour of the proposals when submitted to them in 1853 through the ordinary diplomatic channels. They refused to admit that the dissolution of the sick man was imminent; they repudiated with some heat the idea of a possible partition of his inheritance, and indignantly declined the specific proposals of the Tsar. A foreign critic, quick to detect perfidy and hypocrisy in the policy of Albion, might be forgiven for observing that, while Russia is no nearer the Golden Horn than she was in 1853, Great Britain is in possession both of Cyprus and Egypt. It does not, perhaps, become an English critic to obtrude the point.

Repulsed in his efforts to come to terms with Great Britain, the Tsar then determined to revert to the traditional policy of his House. The question of the Holy Places in Palestine was of secondary significance. It was, indeed, virtually settled when Prince Menschikoff, the rough soldier who represented the Tsar at Constantinople, peremptorily demanded that the Sultan should make a virtual acknowledgement of the Tsar's protectorate over all the Orthodox subjects of the Porte. This demand was based upon the seventh and fourteenth articles of the Treaty of Kainardji. But the text of that famous document shows that the Tsar's demand involved a most extravagant and wholly unwarranted extension of very vague and indefinite engagements.[1] The Porte, inspired throughout the whole of these negotiations by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, naturally declared the Tsar's contention to be inadmissible.

The correspondence of Lord Clarendon throws additional

[1] See Holland, *Treaty Relations between Russia and Turkey*, pp. 41, 42.

and interesting light upon the relations which existed between the Cabinet and their masterful representative at the Porte. Sir James Graham, writing of 'his morbid vanities and implacable antipathies', declares Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to be capable, in the face of peremptory orders to the contrary, of advising the Turk to be refractory, and urges Lord Clarendon to be 'ready to supersede him without the loss of a day'. Superseded he would probably have been, had there been any one to take his place. Lord Cowley, the only possible man, could not be spared from Paris. Lord Clarendon, though disposed to trust and support the 'man on the spot', refers to Stratford as 'the real Sultan', and admits that 'although he ostensibly and officially obeys his instructions he lets his dissent from them be known, and upon that the Turks act'.

To the Russian demand for the acknowledgement of their right to a protectorate over the Greek Christians Lord Clarendon was, however, quite as firmly opposed as was Lord Stratford; and, in the following dispatch, he stated his grounds with unanswerable force and lucidity:

'No Sovereign', he wrote, 'having a proper regard for his own dignity and independence could admit proposals so undefined as those of Prince Menschikoff and by treaty confer upon another and more powerful Sovereign a right of protection over a large portion of his own subjects. However well disguised it may be, yet the fact is that under the vague language of the proposed Sened a perpetual right to interfere in the internal affairs of Turkey would be conferred upon Russia, for, governed as the Greek subjects of the Porte are by their ecclesiastical authorities, and looking as these latter would in all things do for protection to Russia, it follows that fourteen millions of Greeks would henceforth regard the Emperor as their supreme protector, and their allegiance to the Sultan would be little more than nominal, while his own independence would dwindle into vassalage.'

It is not within the scope of the present chapter to follow in detail the course of the negotiations which preceded the Crimean War, still less that of the actual military operations. It is, however, pertinent to refer to an article which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* in April 1863.[1] Written by the then

[1] Vol. xvii, pp. 307–52.

editor, Henry Reeve, it was carefully revised by Lord Clarendon himself. It may therefore be accepted as the authoritative *apologia* of the Aberdeen Cabinet. Primarily intended as a criticism of the first two volumes of Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, it contains a merciless exposure of the shallow sophistries by which that brilliant romancer sought to fasten the responsibility for the war upon the Emperor Napoleon, and to exhibit Great Britain as the latter's unsuspecting dupe and innocent tool. Nothing, as Lord Clarendon and Mr. Reeve insist, could have been further from the truth. Great Britain was not 'drawn or driven along by another Power'. She adopted certain measures 'because they were demanded by her own conception of the duty she had to perform'. The critical point was reached with the rejection by Turkey of the Vienna Note, and that rejection was due to one man.

'No man ever took upon himself a larger amount of responsibility than Lord Stratford when he virtually overruled the decision of the four Powers, including his own Government, and acquiesced in—not to say caused—the rejection of the Vienna Note by the Porte after it had been accepted by Russia. The interpretation afterwards put upon that note by Count Nesselrode showed that he was right; but, nevertheless, that was the point on which the question of peace and war turned. . . . Russia had formed the design to extort from Turkey, in one form or another, a right of protection over the Christians. She never abandoned that design. She thought she could enforce it. The Western Powers interposed, and the strife began.'[1]

What did the war achieve? Sir Robert Morier perhaps expressed the current opinion when he described it as 'the only perfectly useless modern war that has been waged—useless, that is, from the point of view of public utility'.[2] A greater than Morier enshrined in classical phrase the opinion that in the Crimean War 'England put her money on the wrong horse'. Does the verdict of history endorse the judgement of Sir Robert Morier and Lord Salisbury, or does it incline to that of the late Duke of Argyll, who, towards the close of his life, avowed himself as quite unrepentant for his

[1] Ibid., p. 331.
[2] *Op. cit.*, ii. 215.

own share in the matter?[1] What would have happened if the Western Powers had stood aside and permitted Russia to work her will upon the Turk? The Tsar would have been the sole and formal Protector of the Christian subjects of the Sultan; the Black Sea would have been converted into a Russian lake; Constantinople would have become an outpost of the Russian Empire; Russia would have dominated the narrow straits—thus realizing the ambitions of a century—and would have established an exclusive and dangerous domination in the Eastern waters of the Mediterranean. Could the mistress of India have contemplated these results with complacency? The Aberdeen Cabinet decided that she could not, and on the whole the best historical criticism tends towards an approval of that decision. That the immediate results of the war were not commensurate with the sacrifices it entailed may be admitted. That is true of almost every war. It is also true that the Crimean War appeared to redound much more to the credit of France, or rather of Napoleon, than of England. But the power which gained most from it was neither England nor France, but Sardinia.

Among the diplomatists who, in March 1856, assembled in Congress at Paris, by far the most striking personality was that of Count Cavour. To gain access to that Congress Cavour had overborne the opposition of his colleagues and had sent a Sardinian contingent to take its place side by side with the English and French armies in the Crimea. The Italian troops had done their work gallantly. In the waters of the Tchernaya the stain of Novara was wiped out for ever; out of the mud of the trenches before Sebastopol modern Italy was built. Later on, when the plenipotentiaries of the Great Powers assembled in Congress at Paris, Cavour took his place as the representative, not merely of Sardinia, but in a sense of Italy. To the tale of misgovernment and oppression unfolded by the Sardinian premier the English representatives, Lord Clarendon and Lord Cowley, lent sympathetic though cautious

[1] *Our Responsibilities for Turkey* (1896), p. 10.

ears. Napoleon, seldom cautious, was ready with something more than sympathy. The interest of the ex-Carbonaro in the destinies of Italy may have been inconstant, but it was genuine. 'Que peut-on faire pour l'Italie?' was Napoleon's question to Cavour. The latter was ready with his answer; the bargain was struck and sealed at Plombières in 1858, and in 1859 Europe was startled by the outbreak of the Franco-Sardinian War against Austria.

Napoleon's Italian policy has been very hardly judged both in England and in Italy itself. Lord Palmerston, writing to Clarendon at the height of the crisis (April 24, 1859), puts the whole case pithily and with characteristic directness:

'My belief is that, for many years past, Napoleon has had a fixed desire to improve the internal condition of Italy by freeing as much of that country as possible from the crushing weight of Austrian domination, and that he has at various times thought of various ways of attaining his object, but that his object has been one and the same; and I must say that the end he has had in view is much to be wished for.'[1]

That Napoleon, whatever his motives, rendered an incomparable service to the cause of Italian freedom and Italian unity can hardly be denied by any one conversant with the facts. True he demanded and obtained a heavy price, but even this is hardly sufficient to account for the fact that, with singular unanimity, the gratitude of modern Italy is denied to the 'magnanimous ally', and is reserved for the friendly sympathizer—Great Britain.

How was that gratitude earned? That the Italian question excited immense interest in England goes without saying. In the highest quarters it was regarded primarily from the point of view of the European equilibrium: the respect for existing treaties and the maintenance of peace. The attitude of the Court is generally described as pro-Austrian; it would seem rather to have been anti-Napoleonic. The Queen, like many of her most experienced statesmen, including Lord Clarendon himself, was profoundly mistrustful of the Emperor

[1] Maxwell, *op. cit.*, ii. 182.

of the French. At the other end of the social scale there was a small but interesting group of people who were in close sympathy and friendship with Mazzini and the exiles, and desired to see Italy not merely emancipated from a foreign yoke, but united in adherence to republican institutions. The responsible leaders of English Liberalism held a middle position: they ardently hoped that Italy might achieve freedom, but they had not yet dreamed of unity.[1]

The Cabinet which came into office in June 1859 contained three men whose names are enshrined in the hearts of Italian patriots alongside those of Victor Emmanuel, Cavour, Garibaldi, and Mazzini. Ever since 1848 Lord Palmerston had held the view that Austria would be better without Italy, and that Italy would be better without Austria. 'Italy is to Austria', he wrote, 'the heel of Achilles and not the shield of Ajax. The Alps are her natural barrier and her best defence.'[2] Lord John Russell had a general passion for 'freedom' as understood by a typical English Whig, and particular sympathy with Italian aspirations. Mr. Gladstone had been moved to the deepest moral indignation by a sojourn in Naples (1850–1), and by the sight of the tortures inflicted by the Government of the Two Sicilies upon political prisoners. His indignation found characteristic vent in two open letters addressed to Lord Aberdeen in July 1851, and in an article contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* in 1852.

Lord Palmerston sent copies of Mr. Gladstone's letters to all the British representatives in continental capitals, and when asked to circulate, in similar fashion, the official reply of the Neapolitan Government he refused to send out a document 'consisting of a flimsy tissue of bare assertions and reckless denials, mixed up with coarse ribaldry and commonplace abuse'.

When the crisis came Lord Palmerston was out of office. Neither Lord Derby nor Lord Malmesbury shared Palmerston's enthusiasm for Italian liberties. Both shared their sovereign's supreme anxiety to prevent an outbreak of war. To this

[1] Cf. e.g. Morley's *Gladstone*, i. 402, ii. 12.
[2] June 15, 1848, Ashley's *Life*, i. 98.

end the Queen wrote an autograph letter to the Emperor Napoleon (4th of February 1859), urging him to 'respect treaties', and three weeks later Lord Cowley, who was still British Ambassador in Paris, was dispatched on a mediatorial mission to Vienna. Lord Cowley was the bearer of an autograph letter from the Queen to the Emperor of Austria.[1]

But the time for mediation or for friendly solicitation had in truth gone by. The pact of Plombières was in force. Cavour was bent on war; Austria played into his hands. On the 23rd of April, 1859, Austria peremptorily demanded the disarmament of Piedmont; Cavour gleefully accepted the challenge; a French army was immediately landed at Genoa, and on May 13 Victor Emmanuel welcomed to Italian soil his 'magnanimous ally'. Queen Victoria poured out her feelings to 'Uncle Leopold': 'The rashness of the Austrians is indeed a *great* misfortune, for it has placed them in the wrong. Still there is one universal feeling at the conduct of France, and of great suspicion' (May 3, 1859).

Events now moved quickly. Napoleon and Victor Emmanuel went together to the front. 'It was roses, roses, all the way,' writes the biographer of Cavour, 'as befitted that May afternoon and the Maytime of hope in every Italian heart. Then, if ever, might Napoleon believe himself to be a benefactor of mankind.'[2] On June 4 they won a great victory at Magenta; on the 8th, amid scenes of indescribable enthusiasm, they entered Milan; on the 24th they won the double battle of Solferino and San Martino. And then—Napoleon III stopped short, and sought an armistice from the Austrian Emperor. Exactly nine weeks after he had landed at Genoa Napoleon started home again. In Turin he met 'an arctic chill'. 'Thank God he's gone' was Victor Emmanuel's commentary.

This is not the place to canvass Napoleon's motives; our concern is with the policy of the English Government. Between

[1] See Queen Victoria, *Letters*, vol. iii, c. 28, and Martin's *Prince Consort*, iv. 366, 392.

[2] Thayer, *Life of Cavour*.

the battles of Magenta and Solferino that Government had changed hands. Lord Palmerston, Mr. Gladstone, and Lord John Russell were now in power. After Solferino Napoleon had the effrontery to request Great Britain to place his terms before Austria as the basis of an armistice. Lord Palmerston, having no mind to act as Napoleon's cat's-paw and draw upon himself the odium of the Italians, somewhat curtly refused. Nevertheless, on July 11 the preliminaries of an armistice were arranged at Villafranca.

Upon one aspect of this curious transaction additional light has been recently thrown by the published papers and correspondence of Sir Robert Morier. The motives of Napoleon, much canvassed at the time, have now been pretty clearly revealed. Among other things it is established that the military situation after Solferino was less favourable to the victorious allies than has been generally supposed. But the elucidation of one difficulty creates another. If at Villafranca Napoleon made a virtue of necessity, why did Austria agree to help him out of his difficulties? The political and military situation in Germany supplies the answer to both conundrums. The events of 1859 engendered immense excitement in Germany, and of this excitement Prussia prepared to take advantage.

'Prussia was on the point, at the head of her army and at the head of the German Confederation, to carry the war to France at a moment . . . when the chances were all in our favour. Had we been victorious Prussia would have come out with a heightened position in Germany and in the world at large. It was the task and *will* of Austria to prevent this, and for this purpose the sacrifice even of Lombardy did not seem too great.'[1]

Count von Moltke, writing to his brother, put the same point more pithily: 'The gist of the thing is that Austria would rather give up Lombardy than see Prussia at the head of Germany.' But the cession of Lombardy to Piedmont was only one part of the bargain made at Villafranca. The two

[1] Memorandum of a conversation between the Prince Regent of Prussia (afterwards the Emperor William I) and the King of Bavaria, at Baden, written by the former on June 20, 1860. Cf. Morier, i. 235.

Emperors proposed the formation, under the presidency of the Pope, of an Italian Confederation, of which Venetia and the Duchies and States of Central Italy were to be component parts. Lord Palmerston did not like the notion, and, what was even more important, the peoples concerned were inflexibly opposed to it. In the spring of 1860 Tuscany, Modena, Parma, and the Roman Legations resolved by plébiscite upon union with Piedmont. It did not become Napoleon III to question the validity of plébiscites, and he acquiesced in the aggrandizement of his ally; only, however, on condition that Nice and Savoy should be handed over to France in compensation. The cession of these provinces aroused natural but perhaps unreasoning indignation in England; a volunteer force of 130,000 men was rapidly organized, and the Queen scored a point against her ministers by pointing to the perfidy of the 'liberator' of Italy. Events even more stirring were, however, at hand, and interest shifted quickly from the north to the south of the Peninsula.

Early in April 1860 the Sicilians raised the standard of insurrection, and on May 6 Garibaldi and his Thousand sailed, under the virtual but unavowed protection of the Italian fleet, from Genoa to Marsala. With incredible rapidity Garibaldi made himself master of the island, and prepared to cross to the mainland.

Would the maritime Powers permit the extension of the Garibaldian enterprise? It was during the three critical months which followed that Great Britain rendered incomparable service to the cause of Italian unity. Napoleon implored the English Government to send a combined fleet to obstruct Garibaldi's passage across the Straits. Palmerston and Lord John had no mind to help Napoleon, but they had every desire to assist Cavour. They imagined that Cavour was not less anxious than Napoleon to prevent a Garibaldian invasion of Naples. Cavour had, in fact, over-finessed. To the Powers, which, with the one exception of Great Britain, were suspicious and unfriendly, he had been compelled to take the 'correct' attitude in regard to Garibaldi's unauthorized attack upon a friendly Power. He was, however, genuinely

alarmed lest Great Britain should unwittingly assent to Napoleon's proposition. What was he to do?

Mr. George Trevelyan, in the third part of his famous trilogy, has told the whole story with masterly skill: how Cavour consulted Sir James Hudson; how Hudson suggested an unofficial intermediary; how this intermediary, Sir James Lacaita, got access to Lord John Russell and snatched him from the very jaws of Napoleon's emissary (July 24), and how, on the next day, the Cabinet, quite unsuspicious of the influences which had been brought to bear, decided to refuse Napoleon's request.[1] On July 26 the formal but fateful dispatch was sent off to Paris, and Napoleon was informed that Her Majesty's Ministers 'were of opinion that no case had been made out for a departure on their part from the general principle of non-intervention', and that 'the Neapolitans ought to be masters either to reject or to receive Garibaldi'. Well might the French Government be amazed at this sudden change of front; Lacaita had done his work well.

But Cavour's difficulties were not over, and once more he owed much to Great Britain. Garibaldi's march from Spartivento to Naples was a triumphal progress, and, master of Naples, he announced his intention to annex Rome. At all costs this mad folly must be prevented, and while the King of Naples held Garibaldi in check on the Volturno a Sardinian army was marched into the Romagna. 'Go to Naples,' was Palmerston's advice to Cavour. He went. On October 21 Naples and Sicily declared for union with North Italy: on October 26 Garibaldi handed over the Southern Kingdom to Victor Emmanuel, and on October 27 Lord John Russell indited to Sir James Hudson 'one of the most famous dispatches in the history of our diplomacy'.[2] Having reviewed the motives which seemed to him to justify the popular rising in the Roman and Neapolitan States, he concluded:

[1] Trevelyan, *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy*, p. 104 *seq.* and Appendix A.

[2] The phrase is Lord Morley's (*Gladstone*, ii. 15).

'Such having been the causes and concomitant circumstances of the revolution of Italy, Her Majesty's Government can see no sufficient grounds for the severe censure with which Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia have visited the acts of the King of Sardinia. Her Majesty's Government turn their eyes rather to the gratifying prospect of a people building up the edifice of their liberties, and consolidating the work of their independence, amid the sympathies and good wishes of Europe.'[1]

This dispatch caused Russell to be 'blessed night and morning by twenty millions of Italians', but it excited the anger of all the Courts (not excluding our own) in Europe. 'Ce n'est pas de la diplomatie,' said Baron Brunnow; 'c'est de la polissonnerie.' Diplomacy or not, it effected its purpose. On November 7 Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel entered Naples side by side, and Italy was all but made. The work begun by Napoleon III was, by a curious irony, completed by his great rival.

The centre of diplomatic interest now shifts from Italy to Germany. In 1862, Bismarck, after serving his diplomatic apprenticeship at Frankfort, St. Petersburg, and Paris, was recalled to assume the reins of power at Berlin. The Polish insurrection of 1863 gave him the opportunity of gaining the goodwill of Russia and of gauging at once the impotence of France and the indifference of England. In Italian affairs the Whig leaders were genuinely interested, and were able to effect a good deal simply by the manifestation of platonic sympathy. In Germany they had to deal with a diplomatist who paid no attention to words unsupported by action.

Words were never wanting to Lord John Russell. Burning with sympathy for oppressed nationalities, he addressed to the Tsar a characteristic homily on the subject of Poland, and, for reply, was told to mind his own business. Napoleon would have liked to interfere more forcibly, but was preoccupied with the affairs of Mexico, and contented himself with the suggestion of a Congress. The British Government refused

[1] Maxwell, *Clarendon*, ii. 203.

to join him in an invitation;[1] the Tsar was left to work his will upon the Poles. The whole incident has a significance quite apart from Poland. It exhibited the foreign policy of the Whigs in its worst and weakest aspect—a priggish and hectoring tone, combined with an unreadiness to employ force in support of convictions; it secured the benevolent neutrality of Russia towards the policy which Bismarck had already in contemplation; it led to the refusal of Great Britain to join Napoleon in calling a European Congress to consider the European situation at large, and thus weakened at a critical moment the Anglo-French entente;[2] above all, it enabled Bismarck to take the measure both of Napoleon III and the Whig Government in England. 'I do not desire war, but neither do I desire peace.' Thus Napoleon to the French Senate (March 17, 1863). Lord Russell genuinely desired peace, but he desired also to secure the results which only successful war could have given him. Neither the Tsar nor Bismarck was a man to concede anything except to force, and the final result not only constituted a decided rebuff for Russell, but reacted very unfavourably upon the position of England and France in regard to the Schleswig-Holstein question. This intricate and embarrassing problem was once more brought prominently to the front by the death, in 1863, of King Frederick VII of Denmark. Frederick was not only King of Denmark but Duke of Schleswig and Holstein, and his death raised in an acute form an historic controversy. Into the merits of that controversy it is impossible to enter.[3] Most Englishmen content themselves with the repetition of Lord Palmerston's convenient epigram. The more curious may be referred to an admirable *résumé* of the whole question from the accomplished pen of Sir Robert Morier.[4] Here it must suffice to

[1] See ap. Maxwell's *Clarendon*, ii. 286, a very interesting letter addressed to Lord Clarendon by Queen Sophia of Holland, deploring the refusal of England.

[2] For Palmerston's reasons cf. his letter to King Leopold, ap. *Ashley*, ii. 237.

[3] For further details cf. Chapter V *infra*.

[4] *Op. cit.*, i, p. 90 *seq.*

say that Great Britain was primarily responsible for the Treaty of London (1852). Great Britain was herself a party to that treaty, as were Denmark, Russia, France, Prussia, and Austria, but not, be it noted, the Germanic Confederation. The essential point of the treaty was that the Powers recognized the right of Prince Christian of Glücksburg to succeed to the whole of the States united under the sceptre of the Danish King, and specifically based their recognition upon the importance to European peace of 'the maintenance of the integrity of the Danish monarchy'.

Bismarck was not slow to perceive that the integrity of the Danish monarchy was inconsistent with his ideal of a dominant, or even a powerful, Prussia. To him the Schleswig-Holstein question meant two things: the chance of acquiring for Prussia the great harbour of Kiel, and the opportunity of fastening a quarrel upon Austria and the Germanic *Bund*. With complete unscrupulousness but with consummate adroitness he achieved both ends. Austria, having foolishly consented to join Prussia in an attack upon the Duchies, subsequently found herself compelled to fight her partner in infamy. The German Diet sided with Austria, and Prussia emerged from the brief conflict mistress of the Duchies, President of a North German Confederation, and the first military Power on the Continent.

At these pregnant events England looked on impotent. Russell, if left to himself, might perhaps have sent an English squadron to the Baltic to enforce mediation, and have invited Napoleon to send an army to the Rhine. But Palmerston did not like the idea of a French army on the Rhine. Nor did Queen Victoria. Dynastic influences operated, at this juncture, in divergent directions. On the one hand the daughter of Prince Christian of Glücksburg, by this time King of Denmark, had but lately arrived in England, and the English people had at once taken to their hearts the beautiful bride of the Prince of Wales. On the other hand, the prospects of the Princess Royal of England were sensibly improved by the aggrandizement of Prussia. Nor were these the only interests involved. The Kingdom of Hanover and the Electorate of Hesse each

in its way closely connected with Great Britain, were among the spoils which fell to Prussia after the Seven Weeks' War. Nevertheless, the Queen's attitude throughout these trying times was consistently 'correct', and extorted the admiration of Mr. Gladstone.

'Often as I have been struck', he wrote, 'by the Queen's extraordinary integrity of mind . . . I never felt it more than on hearing and reading a letter of hers . . . about the Danish question. Her determination in this case, as in others, not inwardly to "sell the truth" overbears all prepossessions and longings, strong as they are, on the German side.'

That the events in Germany, 1863–7, reacted unfavourably upon English prestige cannot, however, be denied. Thus the late Lord Salisbury wrote in 1864: 'Lord Russell's fierce notes and pacific measures furnish an endless theme for the taunts of those who would gladly see the influence of England in the councils of Europe destroyed.' Lord Salisbury might be suspected of partisan bias. Not so the ripe diplomatist Sir Alexander Malet, the last representative of Great Britain at Frankfort. Reviewing these events in his valuable work on *The Overthrow of the Germanic Confederation*, published in 1870, Malet affirmed his deliberate opinion that England's 'desertion of Denmark lowered her national reputation and left a stigma of egotism on the nation'.[1]

The worst consequence of British policy at this juncture was the impression conveyed to the mind of Bismarck that, on the Continent, he could work his will with impunity, secure from any interference on the part of Great Britain. The next move in the diplomatic game revealed this consequence only too clearly.

'It is France', wrote Marshal Randon, 'which has been conquered at Sadowa.' 'The French Empire', says Lord Acton, 'was imperilled as much as the Austrian by the war of 1866.' The Seven Weeks' War was barely ended when Bismarck avowed his belief that it 'lay in the logic of history' that 'a war with France would follow upon the war with

[1] p. 27.

Austria'. The accuracy of these forecasts was quickly demonstrated. After the dramatic and decisive defeat of Austria, Napoleon could hardly afford to sit still. His own health was failing; his political prestige had been fatally damaged by the Mexican fiasco; things looked black, if not for his country, at least for his dynasty. Bismarck, meanwhile, had taken an accurate measure of the man. In 1865 he met the Emperor at Biarritz, and by dangling before his eyes the bait of territorial aggrandizement had secured the promise of Venetia for Victor Emmanuel and of French neutrality in the imminent struggle with Austria. In regard to that struggle Napoleon made a prodigious miscalculation. He imagined that the contest between the two great German Powers would be not merely bitter but prolonged, and that when the combatants were mutually exhausted he would be able to step in as mediator. After such a service he would not depart unrewarded. That France must obtain territorial compensation for the recent aggrandizement of the Hohenzollern seems to have become a fixed article of political faith with Napoleon and the statesmen of the 'Liberal Empire'—notably Gramont and Ollivier. And the idea was encouraged by Bismarck himself. He was careful that there should be no record of the 'conversations' at Biarritz, but that the question of compensations was under friendly discussion is not open to doubt. Napoleon, therefore, was not without warrant for the belief that when his claims were put forward—perhaps to a Rhine province, perhaps to Luxemburg, perhaps even to Belgium—he would meet with no opposition from Berlin.

Vastly different was the event. Not more than three men in Europe were prepared for the completeness of Prussia's triumph over Austria and the *Bund*. And not even Roon or Moltke or Bismarck was prepared for the rapidity with which it was achieved. Still less was Napoleon. As a result, all his calculations were upset. So far from coming in as an arbitrator, naming his own price for indispensable services, he found himself, after the Treaty of Prague, a humble suitor to Bismarck for some unconsidered trifle. Appear before the Parisian populace empty-handed he dare not. The Rhenish Palatinate

might suffice. Having got the suggestion in black and white, Bismarck sent on Napoleon's letter to Bavaria, to whom the Palatinate belonged. Nothing did more to procure the adhesion of Bavaria when the greater conflict opened in 1870. Belgium was the next suggestion, the suggestion being almost certainly stimulated by Bismarck himself.[1] Be this as it may, the suggestion served Bismarck's purpose admirably. On no point were English susceptibilities more acute. Queen Victoria evinced the greatest anxiety on the subject, and wrote to remind Lord Clarendon (January 14, 1869) that she had 'invariably expressed the strongest opinion that England was bound, not only by the obligations of treaties, but by interests of vital importance to herself, to maintain the integrity and independence as well as the neutrality of Belgium'. Even Mr. Gladstone was moved to unusual directness of utterance, and insisted to his Foreign Secretary 'That the day when this nation seriously suspects France of meaning ill to Belgian independence will be the last day of friendship with that country, and that then a future will open for which no man can answer'. On March 16, 1869, Lord Clarendon wrote to Lord Lyons: 'We are very anxious about the Belgian business because more or less convinced that the Emperor is meaning mischief and intending to establish unfriendly relations with Belgium preparatory to ulterior designs.'[2]

Lord Clarendon held the opinion that the idea of Bismarck egging Napoleon on to an attack on Belgian independence was a mare's-nest. But Clarendon had not the evidence before him. Nevertheless he perceived clearly enough the general tendency of Bismarckian diplomacy. 'A quarrel between France and England,' he wrote, 'or even a coolness, is the great German desideratum'; and again: 'I believe that nothing would be more agreeable to Prussia than that the intimacy between the two countries should be disturbed by a territorial encroachment which would run on all fours with Prussian aggrandizement.'

For the time being Bismarck gave no sign, but just at the

[1] It is right to say that Lord Clarendon scouted this notion.
[2] Newton's *Lord Lyons*, i. 215.

appropriate moment, in 1870, as we shall see, he published the Emperor's proposal to the world, and thus completely alienated England's sympathies from France.

There remained only Luxemburg, but Luxemburg was neutralized under European guarantee by the Treaty of London; and, foiled in that quarter also, Napoleon had no alternative but to persuade himself and his people that, after all, Prussia was weakened rather than strengthened by the events of 1866, and that in reality no territorial compensation was due to France.

The events which immediately preceded the outbreak of war between Germany and France may be conveniently followed in the copious correspondence of Lord Lyons.[1] The latter arrived in Paris as British ambassador in October 1867, and he remained there for twenty years. Almost all his correspondence with Lord Stanley and Lord Clarendon (1867–70) bears witness to the unrest of the public mind in Paris; to the apprehensions of a *coup de théâtre* on the part of the Emperor, to the rumours of war between France and Prussia. Yet, again and again, Lord Lyons expresses his belief in the pacific intentions of the Emperor. Thus, in March 1868, he writes to Lord Stanley: 'For my own part I am more inclined to believe that the Emperor is sincerely anxious to preserve peace.' In this belief he was probably right. As to Prussia he was less well informed. In October 1868 he reports conversations of Lord Clarendon with the King and Queen of Prussia and General Moltke.

'The sum of what was said by all three is that Prussia earnestly desires to keep at peace with France; that she will be very careful not to give offence, and very slow to take offence; that if a war is brought on she will act so as to make it manifest to Germany and to Europe that France is the unprovoked aggressor; that a war brought on evidently by France would infallibly unite all Germany.'

It is noticeable that Bismarck was not included in the conversations. But if he had been it is likely enough that Lord Clarendon would have carried away from Berlin precisely

[1] I, chs. vi, vii, viii.

the same impression, and for the sufficient reason that this was the impression which Bismarck desired to diffuse, and which, as a fact, he did diffuse. Mr. Gladstone himself, writing in the *Edinburgh Review* in October 1870, gave characteristic expression to the prevailing belief:

'We sorrowfully place upon record', he wrote, 'the conviction that the whole proceedings of the French Government, in the conduct of its controversy, constituted one series of unrelieved and lamentable errors; errors so palpable and wanton that, when men observe them in the conduct of a Government which rules perhaps the most richly endowed nation in the world, they appear so wholly unaccountable, upon any of the ordinary rules of judgement applicable to human action, that they are almost perforce referred by bewildered observers to blind theories of chance and fate.'

To this opinion it is still, of course, possible to subscribe even with a fuller knowledge of the facts than Mr. Gladstone possessed in 1870. French diplomacy was indeed inspired during the years preceding the war by 'a spirit of perverse and constant error'. What was imperfectly understood in 1870 was the Machiavellian skill and adroitness with which Bismarck lured the Emperor to his doom. Two distinguished Cambridge scholars—Lord Acton and Dr. Rose—have done more perhaps than any one else to disclose to the English reading world the secret springs of Bismarck's diplomacy during these fateful years. The King and Queen of Prussia, and even General Moltke, might talk peace to Lord Clarendon at Berlin, but Bismarck was bent on war. He was in no hurry about it; every year strengthened his own position, and relatively weakened that of his opponent. None the less, war with France was essential to his plans: essential to the acquisition of Alsace and Lorraine; essential to the adhesion of the South German States to the North German Confederation, and essential to the consolidation of Germany under the hegemony of Prussia. And it was vitally important that France should appear as the aggressor.

That the promotion of the Hohenzollern candidature for the throne of Spain was deliberately designed with this object

is no longer questionable. Lord Acton has proved the accusation to the hilt. In 1868 the Spaniards deposed their none too reputable Queen Isabella and declared for a 'constitutional' monarchy. The offer of the throne was in turn declined by Ferdinand, King-Consort of Portugal, and by Victor Emmanuel's nephew, the Duke of Genoa. Thereupon Bismarck contrived that the Spanish throne should be offered to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a cadet of the Prussian House. Prince Leopold hung back; £50,000 of Prussian bonds found their way to Madrid;[1] the offer was renewed in 1870, and on July 4 was accepted by the Prince.

Events then moved with almost incredible rapidity. It was perfectly well known at Berlin that the acceptance of the Spanish Crown by Prince Leopold would be regarded by France as a *casus belli*, and on July 4 Napoleon sent a formal intimation to that effect. Bismarck had now only one obstacle to fear: the straightforward honesty of his own sovereign. On July 12 Prince Leopold withdrew from the candidature; the Prussian King assented to the withdrawal: the crisis seemed to have been averted, and Bismarck was left to contemplate the ruins of the diplomatic structure he had so laboriously erected. But again fate was kind to him. There were two persons in France not less eager for war than himself: the Duc de Gramont and the Empress. With inconceivable folly the Duc de Gramont required of the King of Prussia an engagement that under no circumstances would he consent to the revival of the Hohenzollern candidature. This preposterous and provocative demand, presented to him at Ems, was courteously but firmly refused by King William, and Lord Granville, as *amicus curiae*, urged the French Government to withdraw it. But, even had they been willing to do so, it was too late. Bismarck had got his chance, and he did not let it slip. If France wanted war and was mad enough to provoke it, war she should have. Too much has been made of the incident of the Ems telegram. There was neither 'forgery' nor 'fraud'. The conduct of Gramont in Paris and Benedetti at Ems gave Bismarck a legitimate opportunity, and

[1] Acton, *Historical Essays*, p. 214.

he turned it to good account. The Emperor still struggled to avert a war for which France was not prepared, but the Empress and Gramont, backed by the Parisian populace, were too strong for him. By a majority of one the Cabinet decided on war (July 14), and on July 19 the declaration of war reached Berlin.

What part did Great Britain play in the events just narrated? Without affectation or reservation she declared herself the friend of both parties to the dispute. At Paris she was very ably represented by Lord Lyons, whose correspondence tends rather to confirm than to correct the accepted view of British diplomacy during this period. In October 1868 the French Government virtually requested that Great Britain should 'give advice to Prussia' on the subject of disarmament. Lord Stanley refused to meddle. Both parties, however, continued to saddle Great Britain with responsibility for the maintenance of peace. Both agreed that England had only to declare that she would join against whichever Power broke the peace. But the real meaning of this was, as Lord Newton insists, 'that at Paris it was expected that England should announce beforehand that she would side with France in case of war, while at Berlin it meant that she should announce beforehand that she would side with Prussia'.[1] In September 1869 Lord Clarendon used the privilege of an old friend to give good advice to Napoleon. The latter, in reply, suggested that Prussia should begin, and in January 1870 Lord Clarendon, at the instance of Count Daru, consented to try to persuade them to do so. 'Perhaps', he wrote to Lyons, 'we are in as good a position as any other Power to make an attempt to bell the cat.' The only practical result was an interesting interchange of views on the general subject of disarmament between Clarendon and Bismarck,[2] and an extraordinary tribute to the character and influence—if not to the perspicacity—of the English minister. On the 27th of June, 1870, Lord Clarendon died, 'in the very act', to use Lord Granville's words, 'of trying to arrange a matter necessary to civilization in Europe'. M. Pierre de la Gorce, in his brilliant *Histoire du*

[1] *Op. cit.*, i, pp. 246–7.

[2] Newton, *Lyons*, I, c. vii.

Second Empire, has expressed the opinion that Clarendon's death was an irreparable disaster to France. Bismarck meant the same thing when, on meeting Lord Clarendon's daughter, he opened the conversation with the abrupt remark: 'Never in my life was I more glad to hear of anything than I was to hear of your father's death.' Lady Emily Russell showed the surprise she naturally felt, and Bismarck added: 'What I mean is that, if your father had lived, he would have prevented the war.'

We may doubt whether, for once, Bismarck was not more polite than accurate. But this much may be admitted: if Clarendon could not have prevented the war, no one else could. Truly it lay in the logic of history.

The war itself had sequelae, if not consequences, of high concern to England. That it cost us the friendship of both principals goes without saying. France thought that we might have done more for her before and during the war; Prussia thought that we did too much. And Bismarck's wrath was never impotent. A hint to Russia, and England found herself, in October 1870, confronted by two disagreeable alternatives: either to acquiesce in the denunciation of the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris, or to fight Russia single-handed. We were not prepared to fight for the neutrality of the Black Sea, and by the Treaty of London (1871) an important section of the Treaty of Paris was torn up.

The Black Sea, however, was relatively remote. Belgium was close to our shores. The neutrality of Belgium had long been a matter of intimate concern to Great Britain. Bismarck was well aware of British susceptibilities in this matter, and on July 25, 1870, he caused to be published in *The Times* the draft of a secret treaty which, so it was alleged, had formed the basis of a negotiation between France and Prussia in 1866.

The history of these negotiations is a tangled and complicated one, and many points are still obscure; there are two, however, which may be stated with confidence. On the one hand, it is certain that on the eve of the critical struggle with Austria in 1866 Bismarck was supremely anxious to secure

the neutrality of France. Nor is it likely that he would have been over-scrupulous as to the means of securing it. On the other hand, it is equally certain that after the rapid and decisive victory of Prussia in the Seven Weeks' War Napoleon III was anxious to secure 'compensations' for France. But the boot was now on the other leg. Bismarck had no longer any use for Napoleon's friendship. On the contrary, as we have seen, he was already contemplating and preparing for the war with France which in his view must inevitably follow upon that with Austria.

Where, then, did the question of Belgium come in? According to Bismarck's own version Napoleon III had privately discussed the matter with him, while he was ambassador in Paris, as far back as 1862. It may well have been so, for the Emperor's mind, as Lord Palmerston wrote at the time, was 'as full of schemes as a warren is full of rabbits'. Moreover, it would help to explain Napoleon's passivity in regard to the Danish Duchies in 1863–4. In September 1865 Bismarck met Napoleon at Biarritz, just at the moment when he was completing his plans for the diplomatic isolation of Austria. That the question of Belgium was again under discussion is more than likely. In June 1866, on the eve of the Seven Weeks' War, there were definite negotiations between Bismarck and Count Benedetti, the French ambassador at Berlin. If the report of the latter may be accepted (and it was made at the time), Bismarck refused to consider the possibility of ceding Rhenish Prussia, but hinted that he might be able to obtain for France the Prussian district of Treves, together with Luxemburg, or parts of Belgium or Switzerland. Benedetti, on his part, claimed to have made it clear to Bismarck that the idea of seizing Belgian or Swiss territory would not be entertained at Paris. If, then, there had been previous negotiations on the subject, either Benedetti was in ignorance of them, or his diplomatic guile and subtlety were at least equal to those of Bismarck. And this has not been suggested.

The Seven Weeks' War ensued. Prussia won the resounding victory of Königgrätz or Sadowa (July 3), and France, there-

upon, promptly put forward a formal demand for the cession of the Bavarian Palatinate, Mainz, and the Prussian territory on the Saar. Bismarck, however, was no longer in a complaisant temper; the demand was unconditionally refused, and France accepted the rebuff. But before the end of August negotiations were resumed at Berlin, and this was probably the moment when the 'Draft Treaty' was indited which Bismarck published to the world on the eve of the Franco-Prussian War.

That Draft Treaty has been the subject of so much discussion, and its terms are intrinsically so important, that it seems desirable to reproduce the *ipsissima verba* of the document as it first appeared in *The Times* on July 25, 1870:

'Projet de Traité.

'Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse et Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Français, jugeant utile de resserrer les liens d'amitié qui les unissent et de consolider les rapports de bon voisinage heureusement existant entre les deux pays, convaincus d'autre part que pour atteindre ce résultat, propre d'ailleurs à assurer le maintien de la paix générale, il leur importe de s'entendre sur des questions qui intéressent leurs relations futures, ont résolu de conclure un traité à cet effet et nommé en conséquence pour leurs plénipotentiaires, savoir:—

'S. M. &c.
S. M. &c.

'Lesquels, après avoir échangé leurs pleins pouvoirs trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus des articles suivants:—

'"Art. I.—Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Français admet et reconnaît les acquisitions que la Prusse a faites à la suite de la dernière guerre qu'elle a soutenue contre l'Autriche et contre ses alliés.

'"Art. II.—Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse promet de faciliter à la France l'acquisition du Luxembourg; à cet effet la dite Majesté entrera en négociations avec sa Majesté le Roi des Pays-Bas pour le déterminer à faire à l'Empereur des Français la cession de ses droits souverains de ce Duché moyennant telle compensation qui sera jugée suffisante ou autrement. De son côté l'Empereur des Français s'engage à assumer les charges pécuniaires que cette transaction peut comporter.

'"Art. III.—Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Français ne s'opposera pas à une union fédérale de la Confédération du Nord avec

les États du Midi de l'Allemagne à l'exception de l'Autriche, laquelle union pourra être basée sur un Parlement commun, tout en respectant, dans une juste mesure, la souveraineté des dits États.

'"Art. IV.—De son côté, Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse, au cas où Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Français serait amené par les circonstances à faire entrer ses troupes en Belgique ou à la conquérir, accordera le secours de ses armes à la France, et il la soutiendra avec toutes ses forces de terre et de mer, envers et contre toute Puissance qui, dans cette éventualité, lui déclarerait la guerre.

'"Art. V.—Pour assurer l'entière exécution des dispositions qui précèdent, Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse et Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Français contractent, par le présent traité, une alliance offensive et défensive qu'ils s'engagent solennellement à maintenir. Leurs Majestés s'obligent, en outre et notamment, à l'observer dans tous les cas où leurs États respectifs, dont elles se garantissent mutuellement l'intégrité, seraient menacés d'une agression, se tenant pour liées, et de ne décliner, sous aucun prétexte, les arrangements militaires qui seraient commandés par leur intérêt commun conformément aux clauses et prévisions ci-dessus énoncées."'[1]

The terms of this remarkable document are extraordinarily free from ambiguity. France was to recognize a federal union between all the German States, South as well as North, except Austria, and in return was to be assisted by Prussia to purchase Luxemburg from the King of the Netherlands and, should circumstances require it, to invade and absorb Belgium.

The Times pledged itself to the 'authenticity' of the document, and wrote in its leading article:

'It is not difficult to extract from the paper itself the secret of its origin. We might easily deduce from internal evidence, if we were not otherwise assured of the truth, that the proposed Treaty was submitted by France to Prussia. . . . The proposed Treaty was rejected at the time it was tendered. . . . It was rejected, but, unless we are misinformed,—and, speaking with all reserve on a subject of such importance, we are satisfied that our information is correct,—the Treaty has been recently again offered as a condition of peace. Means have

[1] A facsimile of this document will be found in *Archives Diplomatiques*, 1871–2, vol. iii. 280-1.

been taken to let it be understood that the old offer was open, and that a ready acceptance of it would save Prussia from attack. The suggestion has not been favourably received . . .'

Whatever the origin of this project we now know that it was revealed by Bismarck. His object is obvious. He intended to excite English susceptibilities on a question which has always been regarded as vital, and thus to alienate their sympathies from France. In the realization of this purpose he was completely, if temporarily, successful.

Bismarck's version was promptly repudiated in France: by Benedetti, by de Gramont, and in a letter indited from Metz (July 28) by the Emperor himself.

'M. de Bismarck a dit,' wrote Napoleon: "Vous cherchez une chose impossible. Vous voulez prendre les provinces du Rhin qui sont allemandes, et qui veulent le rester. Pourquoi ne pas vous adjoindre la Belgique, où existe un peuple qui a la même origine et parle la même langue . . . S'il (l'Empereur) entrait dans ces vues, nous l'aiderions à prendre la Belgique. . . ." En un mot, c'est la Prusse qui a fait l'offre, et c'est nous avons éludé de répondre.'[1]

Still the Draft was in Benedetti's handwriting, and it was written on the paper of the French Embassy. According to the French version, on the other hand, the proposal was dictated to Benedetti by Bismarck and when submitted to the Emperor was immediately declined by him.[2]

Count Benedetti's exact words were:

'Dans une de ces conversations, et afin de me rendre un compte exact de ses combinaisons, j'ai consenti à les transcrire en quelque sorte sous sa dictée . . . M. de Bismarck garda cette rédaction voulant la soumettre au Roi. De mon côté je rendis compte au Gouvernement Impérial des communications qui m'auraient été faites. L'Empereur les repoussa dès qu'elles

[1] For the full text of the Emperor's letter cf. Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, ii. 40; see also Lord Newton's *Life of Lord Lyons*, i. 302-4. Cf. also Hertslet, *British and Foreign State Papers*, LX, pp. 885 *seq.*

[2] Cf. P. de la Gorce, *Hist. du Second Empire*, v. 1–80. In a letter to *The Times* (August 15, 1914) Sir W. Haggard gave, on the authority of a German friend, a circumstantial account of the incident, but subsequently admitted that the evidence was inconclusive.

parvinrent à sa connaissance. Je dois dire que le Roi de Prusse lui-même ne parut pas vouloir en agréer la base.'

The precise truth as to the genesis of the proposal may never perhaps be ascertained; but as to the effect of the publication there is no obscurity. Both Germany and France were eager to convince the world in general and Great Britain in particular of their innocence, and readily agreed to enter into renewed engagements to respect the neutrality of Belgium. Those engagements were embodied in two separate treaties concluded between Great Britain and Prussia and France respectively.

By the Treaty of the 9th of August 1870 the King of Prussia declared his 'fixed determination to respect the neutrality of Belgium so long as the same shall be respected by France', and at the same time entered into an engagement with Great Britain to maintain 'then and thenafter the neutrality of Belgium'. Two days later a precise counterpart of the Anglo-German Treaty was concluded between Great Britain and France. In both treaties Great Britain pledged herself to co-operate with either Germany or France, as the case might be, against the Power which should violate the neutrality of Belgium. It was expressly provided, however, that the co-operation of Great Britain should be strictly confined to the consequences of the violation of Belgian neutrality, and that her military operations should not extend beyond the limits of Belgium.[1]

One word may be added to emphasize the significance of this incident. Bismarck's diplomacy in 1870, however faithless and unscrupulous, at least testifies to his belief that to violate Belgian integrity was to touch England to the quick. In this he judged aright. In 1870 it suited Prussia's game that Belgium's neutrality should be respected by both countries Bismarck's disclosure of the previous negotiations between France and Prussia was a masterstroke of unscrupulous diplomacy. Nor did it fail of its immediate purpose. England stood by and saw France humiliated and despoiled by Germany.

[1] Hertslet, *op. cit.*, pp. 1887 and 1890.

The Franco-German War closes a chapter in the history of European diplomacy. By that war Bismarck placed the coping-stone upon the two edifices most essentially characteristic of the work of the nineteenth century—a United Germany and a United Italy. It needed only the assault of France to bring Bavaria and the other South German States into line with the North; a fortnight after the first shot had been fired on the Rhine the last French soldier left Civita Vecchia. 'Better the Prussians in Paris than the Piedmontese in Rome.' So the Empress Eugénie is reported to have said. The dilemma was unreal; the two dread events were almost simultaneous. In September 1870 the Piedmontese entered Rome; in January 1871 Paris capitulated to the Germans.

These were tangible events. In a more intangible sense the year 1870–1 seems to close an epoch for Europe and for Great Britain. British diplomacy during the mid-Victorian era was essentially continental. It is in connexion with European politics that the names of Palmerston, Aberdeen, Russell, Stanley, Malmesbury, and Clarendon will be remembered. On world-politics they left but slight impress. Nor is that remarkable if we recall their attitude towards 'Imperial' questions. Take, for example, the following sentence from a dispatch from Lord Stanley to Lord Lyons (April 4, 1867):

'The Americans, as you will see, have bought a large amount of worthless territory (Alaska) from Russia at a nominal price. Their motive is probably twofold: to establish a sort of claim in the future to British North America, lying as it does between their old and their new possessions; and to gain a victory over us by doing without our knowledge an act which they probably think will annoy England. In that expectation they will be disappointed, for I cannot find any one who cares about the matter, and the Press in general treats it with indifference.'

Lord Clarendon was something more than indifferent about our possessions in North America. 'I wish', he wrote to Lyons (June 1, 1870), 'that they would propose to be independent and to annex themselves (i.e. to the U.S.A.). We can't throw them off, and it is very desirable that we should part as

friends.' Three years later *The Times* advised the Canadians to set up for themselves, 'as the days of their apprenticeship were over'. Well might Tennyson ask: 'Is this the voice of Empire?'

The voice of Empire it was not. Rather was it the groan of the 'weary Titan' who had been taught by the prophets of the Manchester School to re-echo:

> 'A strain to shame us, "Keep you to yourselves.
> So loyal is too costly! friends—your love
> Is but a burthen: loose the bond and go."'

But the reaction against the doctrine of *laisser-faire*, in politics as in economics, was at hand. The diplomatic firmament in which Clarendon and Russell, Morier, Stanley and Lyons were luminaries was on the point of dissolution. The horizon of diplomatic activity was before long to be immeasurably extended. European politics were to be seen in a new perspective. The era of European parochialism was closed; a struggle for world-supremacy was at hand.

CHAPTER IV

WORLD-POLITICS: A NEW ORIENTATION OF HISTORY

'The cardinal fact of geography in the twentieth century is the shortening of distances and the shrinkage of the globe. . . . The result is that problems which a century ago, or even fifty years ago, were exclusively European now concern the whole world.'—GENERAL SMUTS.

THE preceding chapters have been concerned mainly with the evolution of the States-system of modern Europe. Beginning in the last years of the fifteenth century, that process, as we have seen, culminated towards the end of the nineteenth. It had proceeded under the influence of two governing ideas: the idea of nationality and the idea of liberty; these were the two principles which dominated the nineteenth century, and the sovereign State was consequently the *ultima ratio* alike in politics and in philosophy.

The seventies of the last century witnessed the completion and culmination of this development. At last Europe was exhaustively parcelled out among a number of independent sovereign States. Of these, some owed their existence to great rulers; some to geographical advantages; some, like the Balkan States, were the outcome, on the one hand, of intense nationalism, on the other, of international rivalries; others again, like Switzerland and Belgium, based their right to national independence and territorial integrity upon the faith of international treaties. But in one way or another they had all 'arrived'. Nationalism had reached its zenith.

Did the final triumph of Nationalism promise the permanent maintenance of the European polity? Ever since the dissolution of the medieval unities and the emergence of the independent Nation-State Europe had been striving to attain a condition of stability and equilibrium. From the turmoil of

Italian politics, from the internecine rivalries of her City-States, there had come the idea of a 'balance of power'. Applied to the larger field of European politics that idea operated in two different ways: on the one hand, it induced the several Powers to combine in resistance to the domination of an over-ambitious autocrat; on the other, it led to a succession of territorial re-adjustments which aimed, without any regard to the wishes or traditions of the peoples immediately concerned, at an equitable distribution of the spoils among the victors. Four times in four centuries have the Nation-States of Europe been compelled to combine against the threatened domination of one of their number. It was her desire to maintain the European equilibrium which gave real consistency to the superficial inconsistencies and vacillations, to the apparently bewildering caprice, of the diplomacy of Queen Elizabeth. The dispersion of the Spanish Armada not only preserved the independence of England and of the United Netherlands, it not only saved the cause of religious liberty, but it dealt a death-blow to the ambitions of Philip the Second, and asserted the nascent principle of European equilibrium. A century later the peaceful transference of the English crown from James the Second to the Dutch Stadtholder, the consequent formation of a grand alliance under William's presidency, the seamanship of Rooke, and the genius, military and diplomatic, of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, delivered Europe from the threatened thraldom of Louis the Fourteenth. Another century passed, and the sea-power of England, backed by her long purse and assisted by a soldier second only, if he was second, in ability to Marlborough, frustrated, in similar fashion, the ambition of Napoleon Buonaparte. Against the fourth attempt to enthrall Europe—and not Europe only—we are still in arms.

The theory of the Balance of Power has fallen into dire discredit; not unintelligibly, yet in part undeservedly. Undeservedly, if we bear in mind the inspiration it afforded to a succession of attempts, happily successful, to avert the domination of any single Power; intelligibly, if we concentrate attention upon the crimes wrought in its name against the territorial integrity and the political independence of States great and small.

The Partition Treaties arranged at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, though vehemently denounced by Lord Macaulay, did no violence to the principles which are now held in most esteem. The Empire of the Spanish Habsburgs was purely dynastic in origin, and the fact of its partition (however objectionable some of the details) did not in itself contravene the idea of nationality, nor part asunder peoples who had been joined together in organic union. It mattered little to the people of the Southern Netherlands whether they were ruled by an Austrian or a Spanish Habsburg; whether they had to look for orders to Vienna or to Madrid. The claims of the Bourbons to the Two Sicilies were not historically inferior to those of the Habsburgs: the people were not more Spanish than French. It was far otherwise with the three successive treaties, by which the ancient kingdom of the Poles was wiped off the map of Europe, by which its people became the unwilling subjects of the three neighbouring Powers, Russia, Prussia, and Austria. For such a crime—for the annihilation of a genuine Nation-State—there could be no valid excuse. The same principles which dictated the Polish partitions of 1772, 1793, and 1795 inspired the great European settlement of 1815.

Already, however, the new leaven was at work. The territorial readjustments effected at Vienna did not pass without protest from those who had discovered the faint streaks of the dawn of a new era. The French Revolution had proclaimed the doctrines not merely of Fraternity and Equality, but of Liberty. 'Liberty' began to acquire a fresh connotation: the emancipation not only of the individual from the shackles of domestic tyranny, but of peoples from alien rulers. The principle of 'self-determination' was already implicitly affirmed. As early as 1804 Alexander the First, the most idealistic and not the least ambitious of the rulers of his day, had put forward the idea of 'nationality' as a basic principle for the reconstruction of the European polity. The boundaries of the several States were to be so drawn as to respect the principle of *les limites naturelles*, but also—and the words are noteworthy—'so as to compose the several States of homo-

geneous peoples, which could agree among each other and act in harmony with the government that rules them.'[1] M. Albert Sorel had therefore reason when he wrote that in 1792 France had preached the cosmopolitan Revolution, while in 1813 'Russia unchained the war of nationalities'.

It was that doctrine of nationality which gave coherence to the distracting phenomena of European politics during the greater part of the nineteenth century. The Greeks affirmed it in their initial insurrection against the Ottoman Turks in 1822; it was at the back of the movement for Belgian independence in 1830; it imported an element of romance to the Italian *Risorgimento*; it inspired the Balkan peoples in their struggle for independence; it powerfully assisted the ambition of the Hohenzollern in Germany. Though its operation is manifest, and though its influence upon recent political history has been profound, the idea itself is singularly elusive and defies every attempt at analysis. We recognize its presence by the effects it produces. But by the 'seventies its characteristic work had been achieved. Nationalism was triumphant.

Since the 'seventies we have entered, both in the realm of thought and of action, upon an entirely new era; we have passed, consciously or unconsciously, under the dominion of unfamiliar forces. Some of these we begin to discern. The first is that of physical science. The key-note of the earlier Renaissance—that new birth of learning which reached its zenith in the sixteenth century—was the revelation of a new heaven and a new earth. The scientific work of the astronomers, of Copernicus and Tycho Brahe, of Kepler and Galileo, was clearly complementary to that of Christopher Columbus and Bartholomew Diaz, of Vasco da Gama and the Cabots. Similarly in the nineteenth century; science has reacted powerfully upon politics. By the immense impetus it has given to the means of transport; by the utilization of electricity as a means of communication; by telegraphy, telephony, and by the invention of aircraft it has led to a conspicuous shrinkage in the world. For all practical purposes the world is much

[1] Czartoryski, *Memoirs*, ii p. 36; cf. Phillips, *Confederation of Europe*, p. 61.

smaller than it was half a century ago. Asia, America, Australia, and Africa have come within the ambit of European politics; the continental Chanceries are hardly less concerned with the Pacific than they are with the Mediterranean. This in itself would have involved a shifting in the centre of political gravity. But other forces have been tending in the same direction. The first is that of Imperialism, by which, in this connexion, we denote a desire for territory. Sir John Seeley was perhaps the first among English publicists to give blunt expression to this motive in politics. 'The future', he declared, writing nearly forty years ago, 'is with the big States, States of the type of Russia, the United States, and the British Empire.' Seeley's little volume *The Expansion of England* exercised an influence upon political thought, and indeed political action, comparable to that produced a century earlier by Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Biology also was pressed into the service of Imperialism. The fittest were destined to survive, not only in the animal but in the political world, and the devil would take the hindmost among the nations as among individuals. In the sphere of action Disraeli had been steadily working in the same direction as that indicated, in the sphere of political philosophy, by Professor Seeley. The purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal (1875); the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India (1876); the annexation of the Transvaal (1877); the acquisition of Cyprus (1878) mark progressive stages in the realization of a definite and conscious policy. For Disraeli had the imagination to perceive, long before the truth was revealed to the mass of his countrymen, that a new era was dawning:

'You have', he said, 'a new world, new influences at work, new and unknown objects and dangers with which to cope. . . . The relations of England to Europe are not the same as they were in the days of Lord Chatham or Frederick the Great. The Queen of England has become the sovereign of the most powerful of Oriental States. On the other side of the globe there are now establishments belonging to her teeming with wealth and population. . . . These are vast and novel elements in the distribution of power . . . what our duty is at this critical moment is to maintain the Empire of England.'

Lord Beaconsfield was denounced by opponents as a political charlatan, an Oriental adventurer, a pinchbeck Imperialist. Posterity will decide whether the denunciation was just, or whether the accusations will recoil upon the heads of the accusers. But this is certain: that Lord Beaconsfield perceived that a vast change was taking place under the eyes of his contemporaries, though by the majority of them unperceived, in the centre of political gravity. 'A new world, new influences at work.' Lord Beaconsfield was at least enough of an Englishman to entertain an ardent hope that the new world would be predominantly English, that the new influences might be directed into channels which would subserve the interests of England, and therefore (as an Englishman may be forgiven for believing) the interests of mankind. Such a belief is, doubtless, an apposite illustration of that new imperialistic temper which, since 1870, has contributed one of the dominant notes to European politics.

A second may be discerned in the revival of commercial-nationalism, the neo-protectionism first popularized in Germany by Friedrich List. The triumph of the Manchester School was hailed in England as the inauguration of a new era in international relations. The demolition of commercial barriers was to be the prelude to a universal peace. The most characteristic of all the mid-Victorian singers addressed to the cosmopolitan patrons of the Great Exhibition of 1862 the famous adjuration:

> O ye the wise who think, the wise who reign,
> From growing commerce loose her latest chain,
> And let the fair white-wing'd peacemaker fly
> To happy havens under all the sky,
> And mix the seasons and the golden hours,
> Till each man find his home in all men's good,
> And all men work in noble brotherhood,
> Breaking their mailèd fleets and armèd towers,
> And ruling by obeying nature's powers,
> And gathering all the fruits of earth
> And crowned with all her flowers.

Such was the dream of the Cobdenites: free trade would render war, if not impossible, at least ridiculous; international commerce, if not international law, would silence arms. But

the dream faded. The fiscal policy of England found few imitators. So far from 'breaking their mailèd fleets and armèd towers', the wise who reigned (to say nothing of the wise who thought) piled armaments on armaments. So far from loosing from commerce her latest chain, they raised higher and higher their protective tariffs. Statesmen of the 'realistic' school turned not to Adam Smith but to Friedrich List for inspiration. Not cosmopolitanism but economic nationalism became the fashionable philosophy.

Further consequences ensued. If the nations of Europe were to be self-sufficing, they must needs acquire the command of lands, tropical or semi-tropical, which could supply them with the raw materials essential for the production of their manufactured goods. 'Formerly', as General Smuts lately said in an address to the Geographical Society,

'we did not fully appreciate the tropics as in the economy of civilization. It is only quite recently that people have come to realize that without an abundance of the raw materials which the tropics alone can supply, the highly developed industries of to-day would be impossible. Vegetable and mineral oils, cotton, sisal, rubber, jute, and similar products in vast quantities are essential requirements of the industrial world.'

More than that; they must secure markets in which to dispose of their finished products. It was a revival of the old idea of 'plantations'; of oversea estates to be worked for the benefit of the home proprietors; in a word, the old colonial system denounced by Burke and Adam Smith as unworthy of any nation, save a nation of shopkeepers, and unworthy even of them. Other motives were at work, notably in the new German Empire. A characteristic feature of the Industrial Revolution had everywhere been the rapid growth of population and its aggregation into the towns. With the depletion of the country districts the problem of the food-supply began to loom largely upon the horizon even in those countries which are economically more self-sufficing than is England. In 1871 over sixty-three per cent. of the people of Germany lived in villages and small towns (under 2,000 population), less than two per cent. lived in towns of over 100,000 population. In 1905 only forty-two per cent. lived

in the villages and small towns, while the percentage of dwellers in big cities (over 100,000) had risen from 1·96 to 19. This is a fact of great significance in relation to German *Weltpolitik*. German manufacturers were on the one hand more and more in need of supplies of raw materials, such materials as only tropical lands could supply. On the other hand they needed overseas markets for the disposal of their surplus manufactures. Such markets were not provided by Germans living under the German flag abroad. Emigrants were, indeed, leaving the shores of Germany in increasing numbers. For some years they were leaving at the rate of 200,000 a year, and in 1882 the number reached 250,000. But when they left Germany they were lost to the Fatherland. Of the 2,225,000 Germans who emigrated in the thirty years between 1876 and 1906, over 1,000,000 went to the United States of America; other American States attracted 60,000, less than 10,000 went to Africa.

For some years before the outbreak of the present War German emigration had virtually ceased. The tide indeed had turned. The case for the rendition of the German colonies has lately been argued with great moderation and some plausibility by a writer second to none among Englishmen in his knowledge of Germany.[1] But much of his argument is, I would respectfully submit, not relevant to the existing situation. He points out, truly enough, that whereas England possesses 287 square miles of overseas Empire to every 1,000 of the home population; whereas France possesses 115, Germany possesses only 16; and he insists that the rapid growth of the home population and its increasing density entitles Germany to colonial outlets. But does she desire them? Let Baron von Rechenberg, formerly Governor of German East Africa, answer Mr. Dawson:

'For a number of years immigration into Germany has been much greater than emigration from Germany. . . . Even in times of peace German agriculture had not a surplus but a shortage of labour, and it cannot possibly accord with our interests to increase the shortage by encouraging emigration.

[1] W. H. Dawson, *Problems of the Peace*.

. . . Regrettable though it is, there can be no question at the conclusion of peace of acquiring extensive territory for settlement; there is no appropriate country, and there are no farmers to settle on it.'[1]

But I anticipate the sequence of events. The depletion of German citizens steadily proceeding for thirty years was regarded as serious from the economic point of view; certainly as not less serious in its military aspect. Upon colonial enterprise as such Bismarck looked coldly. He had set before himself two clear and definite but limited ambitions: first, to make Prussia dominant in Germany—to unify Germany under the hegemony of the Hohenzollern; and, secondly, to make Germany dominant in continental Europe. The first ambition was attained in 1871; the second was practically achieved by 1882. The formation of the Triple Alliance in the latter year seemed to render Germany reasonably secure from attack on either front. Her powerful neighbours had, moreover, been diverted to more distant enterprises. England had been encouraged to occupy Egypt; Tunis had been tossed to France; Russia had been stimulated to enterprise in Central Asia, in order that she might give trouble to British India on the N.W. frontier. *Divide et impera.* Set England and France by the ears in Egypt; France and Italy in Tunis; Russia and England in Central Asia. Such was the object of Bismarck's diplomacy.

Meanwhile, pressure was put upon Bismarck to permit and even to encourage the overseas enterprise of his countrymen; but he was strangely reluctant to do so. In his view Germany's place was not on the water, but on the continent. In 1882 there was not a single German living under the German flag abroad. In that year, however, the *Deutscher Kolonialverein* was founded, and two years later the Germans made their first serious plunge into *Weltpolitik.* Once started their progress was amazingly rapid, and within three years the Colonial Empire of Germany, an Empire extending over 1,000,000 square miles of territory, and embracing a native population of over 12,000,000, was a *fait accompli.*

[1] Quoted by General Smuts, *Geographical Journal*, vol. li, No. 3, p. 140.

In Africa Germany had played a considerable part in the preliminary work of exploration. Among geographers and explorers the names of Friedrich Hornemann, who before the end of the eighteenth century made a memorable journey from Tripoli to the Niger; of Baron Karl von der Decken, who surveyed Mount Kilimanjaro in 1860; of Eduard Mohr and Karl Mauch; of Gerard Rohlfs and Gustav Nachtigal, will always be held in high renown. But it is a significant and characteristic fact that German exploration was not followed by German settlement and colonization. The motive force of colonization was lacking to Germany in the 'sixties and early 'seventies, as it was lacking to England in the sixteenth century. And when the impulse did come it came, characteristically, not from the people but from the Government.

'In a degree unparalleled in the history of European Imperialism, the German colonial Empire', writes Mr. Ramsay Muir, 'was the result of force and design, not of a gradual evolution. It was not the product of German enterprise outside of Europe, for, owing to the conditions of her history, Germany had hitherto taken no part in the expansion of Europe; it was the product of Germany's dominating position in Europe, and the expression of her resolve to build up an external empire by the same means which she had employed to create this position.'[1]

It is well and truly said. Nevertheless, once the work was taken in hand, it was carried through by the Government with extraordinary thoroughness, rapidity, and success. The first annexation of the Transvaal by Great Britain, in 1877, and its retrocession in 1881 led, in each case, to direct diplomatic negotiations between Pretoria and Berlin. Paul Kruger himself made two journeys to Berlin and was, on both occasions, cordially welcomed by the old Emperor and his Chancellor. In 1884 Germany made a territorial start in Africa. In that year she established a formal protectorate over what has since been known as German South-West Africa: the whole of the coastlands, with the exception—an important one—of Walfisch Bay, from the Orange River to Cape Frio; in the north-west

[1] *The Expansion of Europe*, p. 140, an illuminating work to which I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness for several suggestive ideas.

of the same continent she annexed Togoland and the Cameroons, while in the Pacific she acquired the greater part of Samoa, the northern coast of New Guinea, and the New Britain and other islands, since known as the Bismarck Archipelago. A year later the German East Africa Company was established and rapidly acquired a large and important territory on the east coast of the continent. The planting of the German flag in East and South-West Africa and her territorial acquisitions in the Pacific aroused stormy protests from the British colonists in South Africa and even stronger protests from the Britons of Australasia. But the protests were disregarded by the Home Government, at that time in the hands of Mr. Gladstone, Lord Granville, and Lord Derby. Bismarck had indeed taken good care, as we have seen, that the hands of the English Government should be securely tied; on the one hand by the complications between England and France which had ensued upon the British occupation of Egypt; on the other by the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia.

Meanwhile, other European Powers had not been idle on the African continent. France had established some trading settlements on the Gambia and Guinea Coast in the seventeenth century; she had made good her position in Algeria between 1830 and 1847; Tunis, as we have seen, had fallen to her in 1881. She occupied the Ivory Coast in 1891; Dahomey, with which she had long had dealings, in 1892, and Madagascar in 1895. Her claims upon Morocco were finally conceded by England in 1904, by Germany in 1909; and a great portion of the Congo has also fallen to her share. Italy, after many vicissitudes, managed to establish herself on the East Coast in Somaliland, and on the Mediterranean Coast in Tripoli. But alike strategically, geographically, and commercially the position of England is incomparably stronger in Africa than that of any of her European rivals. Securely planted on the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean; controlling, in large measure, three out of four of the great African waterways, the Nile, the Niger, and the Zambesi, Britain's position is or ought to be impregnable. What it would have been but for the foresight of Cecil Rhodes, the organizing

genius of Lord Cromer, and the military skill of Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, is more doubtful. What is certain is that it would not be what it is could Germany have prevented it. So long ago as 1879 Ernst von Weber, the real parent of German enterprise in Africa, urged upon Bismarck the acquisition of the Transvaal and the permeation, economic and political, of South Africa.

'If', he writes, 'a European Power were to succeed in gradually bringing these countries altogether under its dominion, or at least under its political influence, a kingdom would be won thereby which in circumference, as well as in the wealth of its productions, would not be second to the British East Indian Empire. It was this unlimited room for annexation in the north, this open access to the heart of Africa which principally inspired me with the idea . . . that Germany should try, by the acquisition of Delagoa Bay and the subsequent continual influx of German emigrants to the Transvaal, to secure the future dominion over this country, and so pave the way for the foundation of a German African Empire of the future.'

That menace to British ascendancy in South Africa could never have arisen had Lord Kimberley been willing to spend a relatively small amount[1] on the purchase of Delagoa Bay in 1872; it was averted by the firmness of Cecil Rhodes, of Mr. Chamberlain, and Lord Milner. But though averted, the history of the last four years has clearly proved that it was not dissipated. In no quarter of the world has the struggle between the British Commonwealth and the German Empire been more severe than upon the African continent. In that struggle British sea-power has been the dominating factor; but hardly second to it in importance have been the wonderful initiative, valour, and endurance of His Majesty's subjects, led by General Botha

[1] I regret to say that diligent search has not enabled me to verify this statement; but I find in Sir Charles Dilke's *Greater Britain* (i. 556, ed. 1890), the following passage which is in a general sense confirmatory:

'Mr. Merriman has, I believe, often said that it is a pity that Delagoa Bay was not purchased by us at a time when a comparatively small sum would have bought out the claims of Portugal. Lord Carnarvon has gone further and has said: "When I succeeded to office I had reason to think that the offer of a moderate sum might have purchased that which a very large amount could not now compass."'

For neither statement does Dilke add references, and his comment upon Lord Carnarvon's statement betrays prejudice.

and General Smuts in South Africa, and the loyalty and discipline of the native levies in West and East.

The surrender of the German colonies in the North-West—Togoland and the Cameroons—was an obvious concession to the Mistress of the Seas. But it was far otherwise in regard to German South-West and German East. We have paid dearly in the last four years for the weakness and procrastination exhibited by Whitehall in the early 'eighties. The inertia which permitted the German occupation of the South-West has never been forgotten or forgiven in South Africa. But not until the present War were the perils involved in it fully revealed. For the Union Government the presence of the Germans in 'South-West' meant not only an enemy vigilant and ready to strike at their gates; but a peril, stealthy, pervasive, and imminent, to be countered within the citadel. Before General Botha could proceed to his difficult task in German South-West, he had to deal with the domestic disaffection so carefully fomented by German intrigues in the Union itself. Over rebels at home, and enemies without, he has achieved a victory, notable and complete. He has done more than that. He has emancipated the natives of South-West Africa from one of the most cruel and galling tyrannies ever imposed by one race upon another. The history of the dealings of the white man with the black contains many chapters which no one can read without regret, and indeed repulsion. But there is no more horrible chapter than that which records the treatment of the Hereros by the Germans in South-West Africa. The entire population, which increases with almost menacing rapidity under the British flag in Africa, has diminished in the South-West from 300,000 to about 140,000; 30,000 to 40,000 Hereros perished in the rebellion of 1904–5 alone, and the race has been virtually exterminated. It is the same in Togoland, where the native population, officially estimated at 2,500,000 in 1894, had declined in 1914 to 1,032,000. In the Cameroons whole districts have been denuded of inhabitants and thousands of natives have taken refuge under the British flag in Nigeria. Yet, notwithstanding these facts, familiar to every educated white man and notorious

among the natives from Capetown to the Zambesi, there must be 'no annexations', lest we violate a formula first proclaimed in Petrograd, lest we offend the Olympian impartiality of invertebrate cosmopolitans, lest we expose ourselves to the imputation of self-seeking motives and territorial greed. It is not too much to say that the mere suggestion of a rendition of German South-West would evoke the bitterest resentment alike among Britons and Boers in Cape Colony, and indeed throughout the Union, and would arouse, as it would deserve, the contempt of every black man south of the Zambesi.

The position in German East is not essentially dissimilar. The case against rendition is not on South African grounds so strong, but it is not less strong on the ground of Imperial strategy, and not much weaker on the humanitarian ground. East Africa is rich in raw material, both human and industrial. Both kinds have been exploited with skill and persistence by the Germans. The task of General Smuts and his successors, and of the truly Imperial forces under their command, has therefore been particularly arduous. But it has been accomplished. And as to the future of the territory? On what principle is it to be determined?

Dr. Solf, the German Secretary for the Colonies, has lately propounded a simple solution of the problem.

'In redividing Africa,' he is reported to have said, 'those nations which have proved most humane towards the natives must be favoured. Germany has always considered that to colonize meant doing mission work. That is why even in the present War the natives of our colonies stick to us. England's colonial history, on the other hand, is nothing but a list of dark crimes.'

Let the test proposed by Dr. Solf be accepted: provided that he is not permitted to act as judge as well as advocate we have no reason to decline it. Apply, if it were possible, the principle of self-determination. The letter from the Principal of St. Andrew's College, Zanzibar,[1] affords some indication of the probable response:

'If the Germans ever return to East Africa', said his native pupils, 'they will find an empty land, for the people will have

[1] *The Times*, March 11, 1918.

crossed the border to live under the English; they will not stay to be done to death by revengeful Germans. If', they asked, 'the English mean to give us back to the Germans, why did they bring the war to our land in the beginning? If they don't want to keep it, why did they want to take it? We shall all have suffered, and so many of our brothers will have died in vain if the only result of the fighting is to lay up for us a German revenge.'

These native-students may be babes and sucklings in philosophy; but in their simplicity they seem to have propounded a dilemma which may perhaps confound the wisdom of the wisest diplomatists.

There are three points at least from which the future of the German colonies may be regarded: that of raw materials, of man-power, and of Imperial strategy. On the first there may be room for reasonable compromise; and there is no reason why the door should not be kept open in a commercial sense to all comers; but on the second and third points compromise is impossible. 'Sovereignty' cannot be divided, nor, as some amiable phrase-makers appear to think, 'internationalized'. The case is put with admirable explicitness from the German standpoint in the following extracts. The first is from the *Deutscher Kurier*:

'German might and influence must be carried far beyond the fortress of Europe. . . . Turkish sovereignty in the Persian Gulf, a German Central African Empire from Dar-es-Salaam (German East) to Duala (Cameroons), will flank the Indian world-sea and will bring our frontiers to the southern part of the Atlantic. Fleet bases in New Guinea and Samoa, on the Moroccan Coast, and in the Azores will complete our influence on the high sea road that girdles the earth.'

The development of submarine activity, in combination with wireless telegraphy, gives to this paragraph a striking, and, for the British Empire, a most sinister significance. On one side we may have to face direct communication, by land and inland seas, from Berlin to Kabul; on another we must contemplate the possibility of a naval base established in the Sea of Marmora and battleships and submarines issuing therefrom to menace our line communications in the Eastern Mediterranean; Duala would threaten our trade via the Cape, while from half

a dozen harbours on the 500 miles of sea-board possessed by German East the German fleets would be in a position to interrupt our trade with India and Australasia via the Canal. The prospect from the standpoint both of overseas trade and of Imperial strategy is menacing beyond the power of computation.

Such an analysis is, however, far from exhaustive. There is the man-power aspect. This War has demonstrated beyond dispute the value of the coloured soldier. The French have utilized the Senegalese to good purpose on the Western front; the Congolese have fought well under Belgian officers in German East, and our own Nigerian troops have given an excellent account of themselves in the Cameroons. None, however, have done better than the native troops brought into the field against us in the East African campaign. The German militarists regard Central Africa, naturally enough, as an almost illimitable recruiting ground.

'Experience of this War has shown', says a writer in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, 'that an East African native, if sufficiently trained and led by Europeans, makes an efficient soldier, while the South-West African is an even better soldier given similar circumstances. In future, in order to prevent her colonies from being overrun by other peoples, Germany must utilize to the full those resources of man-power.'

Herr Emil Zimmermann, the leader of the Central African School, writing in the *Europäische Staats- und Wirtschafts-Zeitung* (June 23, 1917), is even more precise:

'If the Great War makes Central Africa German, fifty years hence 500,000 and more Germans can be living there by the side of 50,000,000 blacks. Then there may be an army of 1,000,000 men in German Africa, and the colony will have its own war-navy like Brazil. An England that is strong in Africa dominates the situation in Southern Europe and does not need us. But from Central Africa we shall dominate the English connexions with South Africa, India, and Australia, and we shall force English policy to reckon with us.'[1]

Under the brilliant inspiration of M. André Chéradame and in deference to the cogent reasoning of Dr. Naumann we have devoted time and thought during the last three years to Pan-

[1] *The Times*, Nov. 9, 1917.

Germanism and to *Mittel-Europa*. Has not our vision, as usual, been too circumscribed? Sir Stanley Maude dissipated, we trust for ever, the dream of an all-German route from Berlin or perhaps Antwerp to Bagdad and Basra. But what if the Berlin to Bokhara scheme be substituted for Berlin to Basra? Vladivostock may be as serviceable as Basra in the development of schemes of *Weltpolitik*. Duala and Dar-es-Salaam may, if restored, cut our lines of communication at two points.

The Germans may not have proved themselves to be successful colonists: they have not indeed sought colonies for the sake of colonization. But at least they have learnt to 'think imperially'. Their colonial aims, as General Smuts has lately pointed out, are 'entirely dominated by far-reaching conceptions of world-politics. Not colonies but military power and strategic positions for exercising world-power in future are her real aims.'

This truth cannot be too strongly impressed alike upon statesmen, upon the leaders and guides of public opinion, and, above all, upon British citizens in all parts of the world. Germany staked everything upon this War. For her it was consciously *Weltmacht oder Niedergang*. She made, necessarily, a late entrance upon the stage of world-politics. But that fact may in itself have contributed something to her clearness of vision and concentration of purpose. Belgrade and Antwerp first: Calais, Boulogne, and perhaps Havre a little later. Yet this was not, in itself, an end. It was a means by which she could fasten her fangs in the throat of England: throttling her in the English Channel; cutting her line of communications in the Eastern Mediterranean; holding up her trade in the Indian Ocean; and, above all, compelling her to concede German claims in Central Africa.

The foregoing paragraphs are in no sense, of course, exhaustive; they are intended to be merely suggestive of the new Orientation of History and Politics, and indicative of the new demands which will in the immediate future be made upon the imagination alike of historians and of statesmen. Both will be compelled to 'think imperially' as they have never done before.

CHAPTER V

THE LOGIC OF HISTORY: THE HOHENZOLLERN TRADITION

'La guerre est l'industrie nationale de la Prusse.'

Securus iudicat orbis terrarum. The judgement of the world has already decided that the responsibility for the present War lies upon the shoulders of Germany: upon its rulers and its people.[1] Nor can there be any doubt that the verdict is in accordance with the facts. As regards the immediate antecedents of the War the judgement may be accepted as final. It may suffice, it has already sufficed, to ease the conscience of the peace-loving people of this country; it has nerved our soldiers, sailors, and airmen to the fulfilment of their heroic duty in the fighting line; it has encouraged our rulers at home to patient persistence in well-doing.

But the scientific student of history has a further duty to perform. It is his, in a large sense, to 'vindicate the ways of

[1] These words were written in September 1914, and the substance of the present chapter was published in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for October 1914. Since that time evidence in support of this verdict has steadily accumulated. No impartial mind could resist the conclusion suggested by the *Collected Diplomatic Documents relating to the Outbreak of the European War*, published early in 1915. To these has since been added the Greek White Book, which was not published, for obvious reasons, until August 1917. The conclusions derived from a study of the official documents have been substantiated in many quarters: notably by the works of Mr. Gerard, the American Ambassador in Berlin; by the publication early in 1918 of the *Revelations* of Prince Lichnowsky, who down to the outbreak of war was German Ambassador in London; by the speeches of Sir Edward (now Viscount) Grey and Mr. Asquith (in particular Mr. Asquith's speech at Cardiff on October 2, 1914, and a 'statement' issued by Sir E. Grey on September 1, 1915); by an article in *Le Temps* (September 1914), by M. Isvolsky, formerly Russian Ambassador in Paris; and not least by an article contributed by Mr. Take Jonescu to the *Grande Revue* for March 1915, a period long anterior to Roumania's entry into the War. Innumerable articles and speeches might be added to this list, but I quote those only upon which the historian of the future may rely as 'original authorities'.

God to man'; it is his function to inquire whether, for the great events which are passing before our eyes, there may not be a more remote, but not therefore less direct, responsibility; whether the past ought not in justice to share the moral burdens of the present? The personal equation is always important in politics, and never more so than in war and in the preparations for war. But there is a force more potent than that exerted by the individuals who play their part upon the contemporary stage. It is the force of historical tradition, moulding throughout the ages the policy of States, and bending to its imperious dictates even the stubborn wills of autocratic rulers. It is the force exerted by what one of the most brilliant of French historians[1] has felicitously described as *les mœurs politiques*.

In no European State, ancient or modern, has political tradition exercised a more profound or more persistent influence than in the territories ruled by the Hohenzollern.[2] No one who fails to acquaint himself with the Hohenzollern tradition can possibly apprehend the full significance of the events which are passing before our eyes to-day, nor set them forth in anything which approximates to correct historical perspective. Bismarck himself paid deference, perhaps unconscious deference, to this subtle force when he made his famous declaration: 'That a war with France will succeed that with Austria lies in the logic of history.' In the present chapter it is proposed to subject that logic to more detailed analysis, and to give to Bismarck's aphorism a more extended application.

It may be well at the outset to invite, and if possible obtain, assent to a series of propositions which may be summarily stated thus:

(i) That modern Prussia is essentially an artificial polity—a literally manufactured product;[3]

(ii) that it has been manufactured by its kings, and by the

[1] M. Albert Sorel.

[2] This tradition has been expounded in detail in *The Evolution of Prussia*, by J. A. R. Marriott and C. Grant Robertson (Clar. Press, 1915).

[3] This proposition has more recently been demonstrated in Professor H. Bergson's brilliant essay *The Meaning of the War* (Fisher Unwin, 1916).

armies to the maintenance of which they have, during long ages, hypothecated all the resources of the State ;

(iii) that by the foresight of Prussian statesmanship and the strength of Prussian arms the modern German Empire has been brought into being ; and

(iv) that the triumph of Prussian policy during the last half-century has not run counter to, but has, in the main, corresponded with the national sentiments of Germany as a whole.

It is no doubt true that the rough methods of Potsdam have not always commended themselves to the smaller States of Germany, and that the interference of the Prussian drill-sergeant has been resented in the lesser German Courts and Principalities which have been the traditional homes of German culture in the pre-Treitschke sense. Still, there can be no greater mistake than to suppose that Prussian hegemony has not fulfilled some at least of the political aspirations of a great but formerly disunited nation. Those centripetal aspirations found their consummation in the events of 1870 and 1871. 'Against whom are the Germans now fighting?' was a question addressed by Thiers to Leopold von Ranke in the autumn of 1870, after the overthrow of Napoleon III. 'It is against Louis XIV that we have now to wage war,' was the great historian's reply. And the reply was as accurate as it was apposite. For at least two hundred years it had been a fixed maxim of French diplomacy to encourage the centrifugal tendencies of the smaller German States and, by maintaining constitutional anarchy and political disintegration, to prevent the growth of a powerful Empire beyond the Rhine. To this end the French conquered and annexed Alsace and a great part of Lorraine. To this end they maintained cordial diplomatic relations with Constantinople, Warsaw, and Stockholm. The archives of the French Foreign Office, which have in late years been made public,[1] disclose beyond all dispute the leading motives of French diplomacy and the persistence with which, for at least three centuries, the predetermined policy was pursued. Even at a moment like the

[1] Cf. *Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France.*

present a sense of historical fair-play compels us to remember that in 1870 Germany had some ground for the belief that the defeat and dismemberment of France must precede any effective effort for the realization of German unity. Plainly, that was what Ranke meant when he declared that the Germans, in 1870, were fighting against Louis XIV. It was a clear apprehension of his meaning which, contrary to expectation, brought the South German States into line with the North German Confederation, and caused all discordant notes to be, for the moment, hushed.

'Seldom had such a national rising been seen—so swift, so universal, so enthusiastic, sweeping away in a moment the heartburnings of liberals and feudals in Prussia, the jealousies of North and South Germans, of Protestants and Catholics.... Never before for centuries, not even in the War of Liberation of 1814, had the whole people felt and acted so completely as one.'[1]

Thus wrote Lord Bryce in the full glow of Teutonic enthusiasm generated by the victories of 1870, and none can gainsay the accuracy of his words.

But a crucial question remained. Was the consummation of German unity in 1871 to be regarded as a goal or as a starting-point? Did German sentiment as opposed to Prussian ambition demand a further step? Bismarck and the old Kaiser unquestionably believed that their life-work had been accomplished by 1871. They sought only, in their remaining years, to conserve the acquisitions of the previous decade; to avert the diplomatic isolation of Germany; and, above all, to obstruct any *rapprochement* between France on the one hand, and Austria, and still more Russia, on the other. But though the old men might chant their *Nunc Dimittis*, though they might rest content with the attainment of German unity under a Prussian hegemony, though they might deprecate the extension of the sphere of German activity and discourage the idea of colonial expansion, their successors could hardly be expected to take the same view. Even the elder statesmen never ceased to be apprehensive as to the

[1] *Holy Roman Empire* (supplementary chapter), p. 433.

designs of France. They were astonished and dismayed by the extraordinary rapidity with which France recovered, both politically and economically, from the crushing disaster of 1871. They almost precipitated a renewal of the contest in 1875, and to the end of their days they were on their guard against a war of *revanche*, for the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine.

The suspicions entertained by William I deepened into certainty in the mind of his grandson. The firm establishment of the Third Republic in France; the elimination of one monarchical candidate after another; the reorganization of the French army; the *rapprochement* of France and England, the conclusion of an alliance between France and Russia; the formation of the triple *entente*—these things might by themselves have tempted William I, and would certainly have induced Bismarck, to renew the contest with France at the first favourable opportunity.

Meanwhile, a new ambition had entered into the soul of William II and the military caste upon which he relied. To them the realization of German unity was not the goal but the starting-point of German policy. To have attained to the first place among the continental Powers was something, but it was not enough. The rapid growth of population, the amazing development of commerce, the patient and persistent training of the nation in arms, the perfection of the military machine—all this suggested more extended ambitions and afforded substantial guarantees for their fulfilment.

Nor can it be denied that from the German point of view there was, if not an adequate excuse, at least a plausible motive for war. For a country conscious of greatness the geographical position of Germany is palpably disadvantageous. Wedged in between enemies on land, her eastern frontier exposed to attack, with a coast-line singularly contracted and ill-adapted to become a base for naval warfare, Germany found herself in an uneasy situation. If she could have rested content with the magnificent position she had already achieved in Europe, well and good. Not for many years, if ever, was that position likely to be effectively threatened. The develop-

ment of the Pan-Slavic sentiment might ultimately have compelled her to defend her eastern frontier, and such a defence might have given the signal for a renewal of the attack from France. But Russia was herself not exempt from menace, and there were other directions towards which, by cautious diplomacy, her ambitions might have been diverted.

Germany had, then, no obvious motive for taking the offensive against either Russia or France, except, indeed, as a means to an end; except for the purpose of enabling her to work her will upon another Power.

For some years past Germany has been consumed by the ambition to challenge the world-power of the British Empire. This truth, long since revealed to the few, can now be denied by none. To the generation of Germans who have graduated in the school of Treitschke the truth is elementary. To an extent which is even yet hardly recognized in England, history has in Germany become the handmaid of politics. The Prussian school of historians, recoiling from the more severe and more scientific method of Ranke, has systematically set itself to the fulfilment of a patriotic purpose. Dahlmann, Häusser, Duncker, Droysen, Sybel, Treitschke—the apostolic succession is unbroken. The first article in the creed of the new cult was the exaltation of the Hohenzollern tradition and the justification to the other German States of the Prussian hegemony. The next was the fulfilment of the world-mission of Germany. But this, as it seemed to the disciples of this school, could be accomplished only by the development of sea-power and by a successful challenge to the world-empire of Britain. As long ago as 1863 Treitschke wrote: 'No salvo salutes the German flag in a foreign port. Our country sails the sea without colours, like a pirate.' General von Bernhardi, whose book came belatedly into circulation in England, is the loyal disciple of Treitschke.

'The German nation,' wrote Bernhardi, 'from the standpoint of its importance to civilization, is fully entitled . . . to aspire to an adequate share in the sovereignty of the world far beyond the limits of its present sphere of influence. . . . It

is a question of life and death for us to keep open our oversea commerce. . . . The maintenance of the freedom of the seas must therefore be always before our eyes as the object of all our naval constructions. Our efforts must not be merely directed towards the necessary repulse of hostile attacks: we must be conscious of the higher ideal, that we wish to follow an effective world-policy, and that our naval power is destined ultimately to support this world-policy. . . . England is planted before our coasts in such a manner that our entire oversea commerce can be easily blocked. . . . We cannot count on an ultimate victory at sea unless we are victorious on land.'

These citations are culled from various parts of General von Bernhardi's *Germany and the Next War*, but it will not be denied that in the aggregate they fairly represent his general line of argument. The author assumes that Germany will have to fight France, Russia, and England, possibly in succession, more probably in combination; and he contends that, therefore, France must be 'completely crushed' as a preliminary to the defeat of England. This is the food on which young Germany has been nourished. 'Paris first, then London.' The annexation of the northern sea-ports of Belgium and France, as a first step towards the capture of English commerce and the acquisition of English colonies.

If Bismarck was right in saying that Sedan followed logically upon Sadowa, Bernhardi may be equally justified in insisting that a second Sedan must prepare the way for the defeat and dismemberment of the British Empire. Such, according to the German reading, is the logic of history. To examine, rather more closely, the premisses of the syllogism is the purpose of the pages that follow. If those premisses are sound, it is not easy to resist the conclusion.

The primary link in the chain of argument is supplied by the first of the propositions enunciated above. The Hohenzollern power represents not the result of natural evolution, but a highly artificial and laboriously manufactured product. Prussia has been made, in defiance of nature, by the genius of her rulers, the valour of her soldiers, and the industry and devotion of a singularly competent civil service.

No political philosopher who looked upon the map of

Europe so lately even as the seventeenth century could possibly have predicted the rise of the Hohenzollern to a dominant position in Germany, still less in Europe. Nothing could have been more unpromising than their situation or prospects. From the sandy waste of Brandenburg they derived an electoral title, but little else; they had lately (1618) succeeded by inheritance to the poor and isolated Duchy of East Prussia, but they still held it as vassals of the King of Poland; they also had claims, eventually conceded, upon one or two duchies in the Rhineland.

Upon these unpromising materials the Electors of Brandenburg set to work, with the clear intention of building up a powerful State in North Germany. From the outset they realized that natural disadvantages could be overcome only by the maintenance of an army quite disproportionate to the immediate requirements of the Electorate. To maintain this army it was essential to develop, or rather to create, the economic resources of the country. Its climate was unfriendly, its soil infertile, its people unskilled, and its geographical situation unfavourable for commerce. The only chance was to import skilled workers, to afford protection to their products, and thus artificially to cultivate the germs of industry and commerce. The expulsion of the Huguenots from France gave the Hohenzollern an opportunity for calculated hospitality which they did not miss. Meanwhile, cautious and ever-watchful diplomacy, combined with the power to strike an effective blow when necessary, enabled the Brandenburg Electors to enter upon the path of territorial consolidation and aggrandizement. The first step was taken at the close of the Thirty Years' War. During the first twenty years of the war Brandenburg played a sorry part. For once the Hohenzollern failed to produce the man for the emergency. Frederick the Great pronounced the Elector George William to have been 'utterly unfit to rule', and our own Charles II might have said of him as he did say of George of Denmark: 'I have tried him drunk and I have tried him sober. Either way there is nothing in him.' Such was the man to whom in Germany's most fateful hour were committed

the fortunes of Brandenburg-Prussia. Fortunately for his country, death released him in 1640 from a burden to which he was manifestly unequal, and during the last eight years of the war the position was to a great extent redeemed by the genius of Frederick William, known to contemporaries and to history as the 'Great Elector'. His reign of forty-eight years (1640–1688) marked the turning-point in the fortunes of his House and country. Himself a strong Calvinist, married to Louisa Henrietta, the eldest daughter of Frederick Henry of Orange, he obtained for the German Calvinists the same privileges as had been granted to the Lutherans by the Peace of Augsburg (1555), and by placing himself at the head of the Corpus Evangelicorum, secured the leadership of German Protestantism. The Treaty of Westphalia (1648) also brought to him valuable territorial acquisitions: the eastern (or 'upper') half of Pomerania, together with the secularized Bishoprics of Cammin, Halberstadt, and Minden, and the reversion (which in 1681 fell in) to the rich archbishopric, with its great fortress-capital, of Magdeburg. Brilliant, indeed, was the contrast between the position of the Electorate in 1640 and in 1648. But that was only a beginning. By the Treaty of Oliva (1660) the Great Elector freed his Duchy of East Prussia from the suzerainty of Poland, and three years later made his solemn entry into Königsberg to take over the sovereign power. Attacked by the Swedes in 1674, at France's direction, Frederick William won a brilliant victory at Fehrbellin (1675), but was deprived, again by the intervention of Louis XIV, of all the fruits of it. His son's reign marked a further step in the progress of the Hohenzollern. Admitted to the charmed circle of royalty in 1701, Frederick I chose to take his kingly title, not from his Electorate of Brandenburg but from his non-German Duchy of East Prussia. His son, Frederick William I (1713–40), was in the main content to husband and develop the economic resources of the infant kingdom. But they were husbanded, as ever, with one supreme object. By the most exact and careful administration a small and poor country, containing only two and a half millions of

inhabitants, was enabled to maintain a standing army of 83,000 men. Macaulay, in a famous essay, satirized the methods and scouted the achievements of the old 'drill sergeant'. More critical history is able to perceive that he played his part not unworthily in the development of the drama of his House. To the recruiting, training, and equipment of a seemingly disproportionate army he devoted all the powers of a keen if narrow intellect, and all the resources of an overtaxed and overburdened people. Nor was the appropriate prize withheld. This potent instrument of ambition was bequeathed, in due time, to the drill sergeant's son, the Great Frederick (1740–86). To what purpose the inheritance was used the history of the eighteenth century eloquently testifies.

The great Duchy of Silesia was the fruit of two wars with Austria (1740–48 and 1756–63), while West Prussia represented Frederick's share in the first partition of Poland (1772). By these vitally important acquisitions Prussia became for the first time a really compact and consolidated kingdom. But Frederick's resounding victories in the field did more than fill in and round off the territorial position of his own ancestral dominions. They afforded a rallying-point for German patriotism. 'Never since the dissolution of the Empire of Charlemagne had the Teutonic race won such a field against the French (as the battle of Rossbach). The fame of Frederick began to supply in some degree the place of a common government and a common capital. Then first it was manifest that the Germans were truly a nation.' Thus wrote Carlyle with characteristic over-emphasis and exaggeration, but not without substantial truth; and the truth is more clearly revealed in Frederick's last political achievement. The *Fürstenbund*, or league of German princes, which in 1785 Frederick the Great formed to restrain the ambition of the Emperor Joseph II, seemed actually to foreshadow the transference of supremacy from Vienna to Berlin. But Prussia's hour had not yet come. The war of the French Revolution ensued. Fishing in very troubled waters, Frederick William II was able to secure large slices of the doomed kingdom of Poland in 1793

and 1795. By this means South Prussia and New East Prussia were incorporated in the dominions of the Hohenzollern. But these partitions of Poland represented, for the time being, the last of a long and unbroken series of cynical and shameless successes. A time of tribulation was at hand. Prussia's initial intervention in the war against revolutionary France was brief and inglorious, and by the Treaty of Bâle (1795) she purchased from the French Republic peace at the price of honour. For the next ten years she took no further part in the war, being now contemptuously caressed and now brutally bullied by Napoleon. In 1805, however, Napoleon's insults became unbearable, and the Prussian worm at last turned. And the worm had to pay heavily for turning. The only result of Prussia's plucky but ill-timed intervention was the crushing military disaster at Jena, followed by the occupation of Berlin, the humiliation of the Prussian king, and the dismemberment of the Prussian kingdom. The Treaty of Tilsit (1807) marked the nadir of the Hohenzollern fortunes. At one fell blow Prussia was deprived of all her possessions west of the Elbe and of all that she had nefariously obtained from the spoils of Poland since 1772; she had to pay a crushing war-indemnity, to recognize the new Napoleonic kingdoms in Germany and elsewhere, to keep her harbours closed against English trade and English ships, and, a little later, to reduce her own army to 42,000 men.

The Treaty of Tilsit marked, however, for Prussia not only the nadir of degradation, but the beginning of regeneration. Out of her deep humiliation came resurrection and salvation. In three years (1807–10) a small group of singularly enlightened statesmen, of whom one only was by birth a subject of the Hohenzollern, carried through a series of reforms which transformed Prussia hardly less completely than those of the Constituent Assembly had transformed France. Stein, Hardenberg, Scharnhorst, Humboldt—these men literally re-made Prussia. The first two reorganized the social, the agrarian, and, to a large extent, the political system of the country. Scharnhorst initiated a series of far-reaching reforms which transformed the old and obsolete army-system

of Frederick the Great into the efficient machine of to-day. Henceforth every citizen in Prussia was to be trained in the use of arms. The active army, in obedience to Napoleon's dictates, was cut down to 40,000 men; but after a short service with the colours the citizen was to pass into the reserve, and, in addition, there was to be a *Landwehr* for home defence, and a *Landsturm*, or general arming of the population, for guerrilla warfare. What Scharnhorst and his colleague Gneisenau did for national defence, Humboldt effected in the sphere of national education. Thus was Prussia completely transformed. In a social, an economic, a military, and an educational sense Prussia was born again. And the new Prussia listened eagerly to the patriotic appeals of Schiller and Fichte. Nor was it Prussia only that responded to the appeal. Out of the enthusiasm thus generated came the impulse to the German War of Liberation. There is in some quarters in England a natural disposition to regret the disappearance of the Germany which gave birth to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, to Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, and Goethe's *Faust*. The regret is generous and intelligible. But let us not forget, no German can forget, that the Germany which devoted itself to the production of these masterpieces of literature and art was politically impotent, and shortly after their production was compelled by Napoleon to walk wearily through the valley of humiliation.[1] The *Kleinstaaterei* of Germany may have produced great works of art, but it did not avert political catastrophe. Mazzini has won general admiration for his unselfish renunciation of a literary career in favour of the ungenial work of political agitation. He believed and asserted that national self-respect is essential to all vital art. Germany is somewhat inconsistently accused of having preferred political unity to artistic fertility. No self-respecting German could have contemplated without repugnance the idea of a repetition of the disasters which overtook the divided States of the Fatherland between

[1] Cf. the once famous pamphlet *Germany in her Deep Humiliation*, for the publication of which Palm, a Nuremberg bookseller, was shot by order of Napoleon in 1806.

1795 and 1812. It was, after all, only at Leipsic (1813) that Napoleon for the first time learnt what it meant to be at war not merely with the German sovereigns but with the German people.

In the great settlement of 1815 the fates were kind to the Hohenzollern. For the moment the Prussian rulers seemed to have lost sight of their 'German mission'; dynastic and reactionary influences were in the ascendant at Berlin, and if Prussia could have had her way she would have expanded northwards and eastwards; she coveted Poland and the Baltic littoral. Fortunately for herself, her ambitions in that direction were thwarted by Russia, and she had to seek compensation in the west. It came to her in the shape of a great province on both banks of the Rhine—now Rhenish Prussia. The bias thus given to Prussian policy proved to be the turning-point in her political fortunes. She had lost—to Russia—a population mainly Slavic in origin; she gained a population of Germans; she ceased to look towards the Niemen; she began to look across the Rhine. True, between Brandenburg and Rhenish Prussia there was a wide gap: but that gave an excuse for abridging it in 1866. Destiny seemed to be fighting for the Hohenzollern against themselves.

For some time it seemed doubtful whether the Hohenzollern would not defeat destiny, whether they would ever regain the traditional path trodden by the founders of the policy of their House—by the Great Elector, by Frederick William I, and by Frederick II. The territorial settlement of 1815 brought to Prussia more advantages than she deserved. The constitutional settlement represented a decisive defeat for Prussia, and a triumph for her Habsburg rival. Stein and the Prussian patriots would fain have seen Germany united in a *Bundesstaat*. Metternich fought strenuously, and, in the end, successfully, for the establishment of a loose confederation, a mere *Staatenbund*. This arrangement, though profoundly disappointing to the patriots, suited Austria's game, and Austria maintained it, with a brief interval, until Bismarck finally dissolved it at Sadowa. The period between 1815 and 1860 was, then, a period of reaction alike for Germany in

general and in particular for Prussia. Prussian statesmen followed deferentially in the policy which was dictated from Vienna, first by Prince Metternich and afterwards by Felix Schwarzenberg. To the general law of reaction there was only one exception. This was found in the conclusion of a Zollverein between Prussia and most of the other German States. This Customs-Union not only conferred upon Prussia and upon Germany immense benefits from the economic and commercial standpoint, but achieved political results of even greater importance. Politically its significance was threefold: it brought the German States together in a natural way, and cemented their friendship by enduring ties of mutual self-interest; it brought them together under the hegemony of Prussia; and it led to the virtual exclusion of Austria and her heterogenous Empire from the Germanic body. Apart from the Zollverein there was, however, nothing between 1815 and 1860 to indicate that the leadership of the German peoples was likely to pass from Vienna to Berlin.

On the contrary, it seemed as if the Hohenzollern had definitely renounced any such ambition. To a contemporary the history of the revolutionary year 1848–9 must have appeared conclusive in this sense. That year was fraught with profound consequences for the whole future of Germany, and indeed of the world, and its events deserve to be studied with close attention by all who would seek to understand the political psychology of the German people of to-day.[1] The enthusiasm engendered by the War of Liberation had not yet burnt itself out. German liberalism was still almost synonymous with German nationalism. The reforming party in the several States supplied the driving-power to the movement for the realization of national unity. The *Bund* which had been established in 1815 was efficient only in the repression of every manifestation of popular feeling. Gradually, therefore, people came to understand that domestic reform was hopeless without a fundamental change in the character of the central institu-

[1] Mr. H. A. L. Fisher has devoted an admirable chapter to this subject in his *Republican Tradition in Europe*; and cf. *Evolution of Prussia*, by J. A. R. Marriott and C. G. Robertson.

tions of the Germanic Confederation. For the purpose of effecting such a change a national Convention was called together at Frankfort on March 31, 1848. This Convention summoned a national Constituent Assembly to be elected on the basis of manhood suffrage. This Assembly, known to history as the Frankfort Parliament, met on May 18, and after interminable discussion, drafted a constitution which was to take the form of a federal Empire endowed with an hereditary Emperor, a central representative Parliament, and an executive responsible thereto. The Imperial crown was offered to Frederick William IV of Prussia, but, to the infinite disappointment of the Frankfort delegates, and indeed of all German liberals, the offer was declined.

The decision thus made by Frederick William IV was one of the most fateful ever reached in the history of Germany. The reasons for it are not obscure. The Prussian king was a romanticist and a conservative; loyal to the Habsburgs, a devout believer in the doctrine of Divine Right, gravely mistrustful of the forces of democracy. He refused to wear what to him would have been a 'crown of shame'; he was not prepared to demean himself and his House by becoming 'the serf of the Revolution'; above all, he was resolved that Prussia should not be 'merged in Germany'.

To the merging of Prussia in Germany there was, however, an alternative: Germany might be merged in Prussia. That the alternative was adopted was due to the genius and resolution of one man. In the year 1861 William I, who since 1858 had ruled Prussia as Prince Regent, succeeded his brother as king. A year later he called to his counsels Count Otto von Bismarck.

The first ten years of Bismarck's rule were crowded with events of high significance. Bismarck was perfectly clear as to the task before him, and not less clear as to the means by which it was to be accomplished. To its accomplishment he brought large experience of statecraft and diplomacy, an inflexible will and a conscience entirely void of scruple. As Prussian representative in the Diet of Frankfort he had gauged the tendencies of Austrian policy. He was convinced that

Austria's supreme object was to thwart the progress of Prussia, and to do this by fomenting the jealousy of the smaller States. As ambassador to Petersburg and to Paris he had not only put his finger on the pulse of European diplomacy, but had taken the measure of two considerable personalities, Alexander II and Napoleon III. He came back to Berlin in 1862 well equipped for the work to which he put his hand. That work was the Prussianization of Germany and the accomplishment of German unity and Prussian hegemony.

Bismarck was under no illusion as to the instruments which he would be compelled to use. 'The great questions of the time are not to be solved by speeches and parliamentary votes, but by blood and iron.' The iron was supplied by the genius and industry of Roon and Moltke. The former had already rearmed the Prussian army with a new weapon—the needle-gun—destined to give it an easy victory in the next great war. In the latter Bismarck found a strategist and organizer of war of the very highest order. Both his coadjutors were soon put to the test.

In 1863 war between Prussia and Austria seemed imminent. The Emperor Francis Joseph had convoked a conference of the reigning princes of Germany to discuss a revision of the Federal Constitution. Bismarck induced his master to decline the Emperor's invitation on the ground that the 'Austrian project did not harmonize with the proper position of the Prussian monarchy or with the interests of the German people'. Relations between the two Powers were seriously strained by this discourteous refusal, but war was temporarily averted by the revival of another question of pre-eminent significance.

By the death of Frederick VII of Denmark, in 1863, a crisis was precipitated in regard to Schleswig-Holstein. Bismarck instantly perceived the possibilities of the situation, and without scruple or hesitation proceeded to turn it to the profit of Prussia. Thus regarded, Schleswig-Holstein is the first act in a drama which in January 1871 reached its brilliant *dénouement* in the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles. It is worth while to follow the action of this drama with some attention; we are witnessing the epilogue to-day.

No man could have played a diplomatic game as Bismarck played it, from 1863 to 1871, unless he had carefully thought out each successive and consequential move beforehand. Those moves it is now possible to discern and disclose.

The first was upon Schleswig-Holstein. Into the tangled historical problems presented by the position of these Duchies it is happily unnecessary to plunge. The relations of the two Duchies to the Crown of Denmark on the one side and to the Germanic body on the other; the conflicting claims of Prince Christian of Glücksburg (afterwards Christian IX of Denmark) and of Duke Frederick of Augustenburg; the attitude and policy of the Great Powers, and notably the obligations of Great Britain, France, and Russia, of Prussia and Austria, as signatories of the Treaty of London (1852)—these things, though of high intrinsic importance, are not our primary concern. In the present connexion the Schleswig-Holstein question is significant as affording the opportunity for the first move in Bismarck's extraordinarily ingenious and perfectly unscrupulous diplomatic game.

In the imbroglio about the Duchies Bismarck perceived three possibilities: (i) the possibility of acquiring for Prussia an extended coast-line and a magnificent harbour; (ii) the possibility of fixing a quarrel upon Austria; and (iii) the possibility of inducing his master, who was not only a keen Prussian but a loyal German, to deal a death-blow at the Germanic Bund—an organization which had long been employed to promote Habsburg and to obstruct Hohenzollern interests. His crafty calculations were fulfilled with marvellous precision.

His first business was to induce Austria to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for Prussia in Schleswig-Holstein. This Austria, with almost incredible stupidity, consented to do. The claims first of Prince Christian, then those of Duke Frederick, were roughly repudiated. The Danes resisted by arms the intrusion of the Germans, but they were presently overpowered, and Austria and Prussia found themselves in possession of the Duchies. But what had become of the signatory Powers which in 1852 had guaranteed Danish integrity? Russia had been

'squared' beforehand by Bismarck's friendly attitude during the Polish insurrection of 1863. Napoleon III was already involved in his fatuous Mexican adventure; England, in the hands of Lord Russell, could be safely counted on to talk much and do little. It was not that English statesmen were blind to the significance of the question. 'There is no use', said Palmerston in 1863,

'in disguising the fact that what is at the bottom of the German design . . . is the dream of a German fleet and the wish to get Kiel as a German sea-port. That may be a good reason why they should wish it; but it is no reason why they should violate the rights and independence of Denmark. . . . If any violent attempt were made to overthrow those rights and interfere with that independence, those who made the attempt would find in the result that it would not be Denmark alone with which they would have to contend.'

Brave words. To our eternal shame it has to be confessed that Bismarck estimated them at their true value. Between Prussia and the attainment of her ambitions in Schleswig-Holstein there was nothing but 'a scrap of paper'. It is true that the paper bore the signature of Great Britain. But Great Britain was in an ultra-pacific temper. Moreover, Lord Palmerston had of late years been growing—and not without reason—more and more mistrustful of Napoleon III, and he preferred, on the whole, to see a Prussian army in Schleswig than a French army on the Rhine.

Not from England, therefore, had Bismarck to fear effective resistance to his predatory schemes. That her desertion of Denmark fatally damaged her prestige on the Continent is unquestionable. Bismarck certainly drew very definite conclusions from this diplomatic episode, and bequeathed them as maxims of State to his successors. England might be relied upon to moralize and to lecture, but not for the sake of a 'scrap of paper' would she draw the sword. Had England acted differently in 1864 she might not have been compelled, in order to enforce respect for another 'scrap of paper', to draw the sword fifty years afterwards.

Meanwhile, Bismarck continued to play a very difficult game with consummate adroitness and complete success. By

the Treaty of Vienna, in 1864, the Danish Duchies were handed over conjointly to Austria and Prussia. Almost immediately, quarrels broke out between the partners in crime as to the disposal of the booty. Austria was scandalously treated by Prussia; but was backed by the Bund and things looked like war.

Bismarck, however, was not quite ready, and accordingly a conference between the sovereigns was arranged at Gastein to 'paper over the cracks' (1865). But the cracks widened, and by 1866 Bismarck was ready. He complained that Austria was encouraging the 'pretensions' of Duke Frederick of Augustenburg, the legitimate heir to the Danish Duchies. Austria, accordingly, was unceremoniously bundled out of Holstein by Prussia.

This was the signal for war. The German Diet responded (June 14, 1866) by ordering a mobilization of the Federal forces against Prussia. On June 15 Prussia declared war upon Hanover, Hesse, and Saxony. By the 18th her troops had occupied the three States, and on the same day she declared war upon the other members of the Bund, including Austria. A week's campaign in Bohemia culminated on July 3 in a brilliant victory over the Austrians at Königgrätz (Sadowa); before the end of July the Prussians were within striking distance of Vienna; preliminaries of Peace were arranged on the 26th, and the definitive treaty was signed at Prague on August 2.

One of the most momentous wars in modern history had lasted less than seven weeks.

Bismarck already had his next move in sight and the terms imposed upon Austria were consequently studiously moderate. Prussia asked for no territory from her, though she insisted upon the transference of Venetia to the new kingdom of Italy; she extorted very little money, but on one point she was adamant. The Habsburg Empire, even in respect of its Teutonic provinces, was henceforward to be excluded from Germany. The old 'Bund' was ignominiously dissolved after an inglorious existence of half a century; Prussia annexed Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau, and the free city of

Frankfort-on-Main, as well as the Danish Duchies, Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg. The Hohenzollern thus acquired nearly 25,000 miles of territory and 5,000,000 subjects, and for the first time became masters of a country which stretched continuously from beyond the Niemen to beyond the Rhine. They also became Presidents of a new North German Confederation comprising all the States north of the Main.

After Sadowa Austria was spared, not to say caressed. Bismarck's caresses were never bestowed without calculation. What was his motive?

The history of the next four years supplies the answer. Before the war of 1866, Bismarck, who never left anything to chance, had, as we have seen, met Napoleon III at Biarritz, and had secured his benevolent neutrality by a very indefinite suggestion of some territorial compensation to France—perhaps Belgium, or Luxemburg, or the Palatinate, even it might be the country of the Moselle. Napoleon eagerly swallowed the bait, the more so as he believed that, after Prussia and Austria had mutually exhausted each other, he would be able to step in as mediator, and name his own price for the services rendered. 'Croyez-moi,' he said to Walewski in 1865, 'la guerre entre l'Autriche et la Prusse est une de ces éventualités inespérées qui semblaient devoir ne se produire jamais, et ce n'est pas à nous de contrarier des velléités belliqueuses qui réservent à notre politique plus d'un avantage.'

His miscalculation was as profound as it was pardonable; by first crushing and then caressing Austria, Bismarck entirely turned the tables on Napoleon, and France was left out in the cold. Thus foiled and disappointed, French diplomacy went from blunder to blunder. A demand for Mainz and the Palatinate served only to bring the South German States into line with the North; a request for Belgium and Luxemburg enabled Bismarck to excite alarm and suspicion in London and Petersburg. The Tsar was given a free hand in the Eastern Question, and Napoleon found himself isolated in Europe.

The Franco-German War was, then, the logical sequel to the Seven Weeks' War of 1866.

'La guerre de 1870', as M. Sorel wrote, 'a été la conséquence logique des négociations de 1866. Elle a éclaté comme un coup de foudre pour la France, qui ignorait ces négociations; elle ne surprit pas les hommes qui suivaient depuis quatre ans la marche des événements.'

Bismarck not only followed events: his was the hand that shaped them. If the war of 1870 'lay in the logic' of history, it was Bismarck who ruthlessly applied the logic to a particular case. That he deliberately willed the conflict with France is no longer disputed. It was, however, essential to the fulfilment of his purpose that France should be made to appear as the aggressor. And never was a game more skilfully played. Napoleon's diplomacy was as clumsy as Bismarck's was subtle. Into one trap after another the Emperor tumbled. Anything more maladroit than his management of the Hohenzollern candidature in Spain it would be impossible to imagine. Bismarck, it is true, had all the cards, but his play was so consummate that it is difficult to believe that he would have been beaten, even if Napoleon had held the trumps. As things were, cards and skill were combined; adroit diplomacy was backed by overwhelming force; the Second Empire in France was demolished. France herself was crushed and dismembered: all the Teutonic folk save the Austrian subjects were united under Prussian hegemony, and the Hohenzollern king accepted from the hands of his princely colleagues the crown of a new German Empire.

Bismarck's purpose was accomplished; the destiny of Prussia was fulfilled.

The success of Bismarck's statesmanship and diplomacy is of profound significance to Germany and to the world; but if the results be significant, even more so are the methods by which they were achieved. The Prussianization of Germany was a triumph for the doctrine of force. To that doctrine the German intellect consequently surrendered. Prussia's triumph meant the exaltation of the idea of the State. That idea forms the kernel of the political philosophy of Germany. 'The State', as Treitschke taught, 'is the summit of human society; above it there is absolutely nothing in the history of the

world.' The State is Might. 'To maintain its power is the highest duty of the State; of all political shortcomings, weakness is the most abominable and the most contemptible. It is the sin against the Holy Ghost of Politics.'

The teaching of Treitschke is thus complementary to the policy of Bismarck. Between 1862 and 1871 blood and iron did the work which in 1848–9 the talkative journalists and professorial doctrinaires had grievously failed—from little fault of their own—to accomplish. Germany was hypnotized by the success of Prussia, by the triumph attained through the traditional methods of the Hohenzollern.

Those methods seemed to be applicable to commerce no less than to war. The success of German traders between 1870 and 1914 was not less dazzling than that achieved by Prussian soldiers in the decade 1862–71. Could any one set limits to the successful application of Hohenzollern methods? To have transformed the Germany of 1860 into the Germany of 1900 was an achievement, political and economic, of which any one might well be proud. What wonder that the intoxicating wine mounted to the brain of the German people and their rulers? Was not a people which could achieve so much destined to achieve much more? What power on earth could hope successfully to oppose the combined offensive of German organization, German science, and German arms? Not the uncivilized Slav; nor the decadent Gaul; least of all the Englishman absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure and distracted by domestic divisions.

For the last forty years Europe has been, admittedly, in a state of unstable equilibrium. Great armies have been crouching, ready at the given signal to spring at each other's throats. More recently, the Powers had combined into two groups; and of these one was armed—very imperfectly armed—primarily for defence; the other was armed quite obviously, and much more efficiently, for offence. Both groups agreed that the condition of unstable equilibrium could not permanently endure. But while the one group believed that the armed peace might gradually give place to a commonwealth of nations; to an internationalism based upon the recognition

of the principle of national freedom and national independence —for the small and weak no less than for the powerful and great; the other group was convinced that the solution could come only from the victory in arms of the strongest and best equipped.

So the issue of 1848–9 has to be fought out afresh, on a larger scale, and, as we confidently hope, to a different conclusion. European order must at all costs be restored. Some measure of unity must be attained. As things are there would seem to be only two possible alternatives. Germany may be merged in Europe; may take its place in the commonwealth of free nations; or Europe may be merged in Germany; may achieve a semblance of unity under the hegemony of the Hohenzollern.

'After bloody victories the world will be healed by being Germanized.' So said Professor Karl Lamprecht, one of the most distinguished of German historians, in August 1914. That is the Bismarckian method. That is the political application of the philosophy of Treitschke. Europe must be united as Germany was united, not by doctrinaires but by soldiers; not by parliamentary debates and parliamentary resolutions; but by blood and iron.

Is this indeed the destiny of Europe? To attain peace by the Prussian sword? To be rescued from anarchy by the German army? To surrender freedom in exchange for peace? To be organized into happiness and drilled into contentment? Should the Central Empires ever be in a position to dictate the terms of peace, such would unquestionably be the fate of the peoples upon whom the German yoke was imposed. For the irony of the situation is that Germany cannot, as Sir Walter Raleigh has phrased it, 'escape from the entanglement of her own delusions'. The Germans, as he truly says, are already beginning to be

'uneasy about their creed and system, but there is no escape for them; they have sacrificed everything to it: they have impoverished the mind and drilled the imagination of every German citizen, so that Germany appears before the world

with the body of a giant and the mind of a dwarf; they have sacrificed themselves in millions that their creed may prevail, and with their creed they must stand or fall. The State organized as absolute power, responsible to no one, with no duties to its neighbour and with only nominal duties to a slightly subordinate God, *has challenged the soul of man in its dearest possessions*.'

The soul of man has responded to the challenge. The military machine, brought to a marvellous pitch of perfection by the German genius for organization, may have succeeded in destroying the body of more than one of the European States. But though it may kill the body, it cannot kill the soul. On the contrary, the peoples opposed to Germany have, in the long-drawn agony, found their souls: Belgium, France, Italy, are to-day infinitely greater, and, whatever the issue of the conflict, will remain infinitely greater, than they were before the flood descended upon them. Is it otherwise with ourselves? By the admission of friends and foes the British Empire is other and greater to-day than it was in July 1914. It too has found its soul.

This war is, then, primarily a war of creeds. It is not a conflict between ecclesiastical formulae, but between contrasted spiritual ideals. For Germany, not less than her opponents, is fighting for an ideal. To ignore this truth is to underate the strength of the forces to which we find ourselves opposed. This is the conclusion to which we are led by M. Émile Hovelaque in his luminous study of *The Deeper Causes of the War*. Germany, as he points out,

'has transformed the practice and theories of Prussia and her own theories on the essential superiority of the Germanic race into a blind dogma, a mysticism and a religion. . . . She has converted a whole race to the fanatical belief that this war is a supreme duty, a holy crusade, and the domination of the world and all other races a sacred right. . . . Her militarism is consequently a *spiritual* force opposed to the spiritual forces of the Allies.'

Now, as in the wars of the French Revolution, it is with 'an armed doctrine', as Burke then phrased it, that we are at war. The War, therefore, can end only when one ideal or the other is definitely dissipated and destroyed. No premature or patched-

up peace will suffice. Germany must be compelled, not merely to relinquish the territories she has incorporated, not merely to restore the lands she has devastated, and the homes she has desecrated, but to abandon the doctrines which, in her own eyes, justified her acts of aggression, her deeds of cruelty and rapine. There is only one way by which that end may be attained. It must be proved to Germany by the only argument she can appreciate that the dogma she has embraced leads not to success but to disaster. 'When one succeeds,' said Frederick the Great, 'one is never in the wrong.' She must therefore not be permitted to succeed, or she will believe that she is right. The falsity of Germany's dogma must be demonstrated by material misfortune. Between the truth of rival creeds the sword must decide.

If the argument pursued in the foregoing pages be sound, no peace can be lasting so long as the philosophy which justified the outbreak and the conduct of the present War is accepted by any Government or any people. It can only be discredited, being what it is, by failure to achieve the intended result. It postulates *Weltmacht oder Niedergang*. The only possible answer to it is 'Downfall', not, be it observed, the downfall of the German people, but the destruction of the philosophical theory which for the last half-century the German people have accepted, the theory which from the days of Frederick the Great has inspired the statecraft of the Hohenzollern. The distinction here drawn is not perhaps superfluous. The issue raised by the War should be carefully defined. There can be no question as to the survival of the German nation: that is assured. No one to-day proposes to erase Germany from the map as Poland was erased in the eighteenth century. But Europe is determined that Germany shall be suffered to exist only as a unit in a free commonwealth of nations; as a *socius*, not a *dominus*; as an equal, not as a master. And even for a position of equality she must, by good conduct during a period of probation, demonstrate her fitness. France was deemed to have forfeited her right to an equal place in the society of nations by the lapse of the

'Hundred Days', and not until after the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818) was she readmitted. Germany's offences are in a different category, and the period of probation must necessarily be more prolonged. For the intolerable crimes instigated by the Hohenzollern there can be no forgiveness until repentance has been proved by conduct. Otherwise, the sufferings and sacrifices of this present time would have been endured and offered in vain.

The Allies are in arms to inaugurate and to enforce a new standard of international morality. They dare not lay down their arms until the new code of conduct is accepted, and until effective guarantees have been devised that the laws of the new code will be respected. They have formally proclaimed that they can accept no settlement which does not provide for the 'reorganization of Europe, guaranteed by a stable régime and based at once on respect for nationalities and on the right to full security and liberty of economic development possessed by all peoples, small and great, and at the same time upon territorial conventions and international settlements such as to guarantee land and sea frontiers against unjustified attack'. It is idle to ignore the fact that the acceptance of these principles must needs involve the territorial dismemberment of both the Hohenzollern and the Habsburg Empire. It is the fatality of these Empires that both have been founded upon a negation of the principle which is now generally regarded as the only principle which can give stability to an international system—the principle of Nationality. On that principle the Danes of Schleswig must be free to rejoin the Danes of the kingdom; the Prussian Poles must be reunited with their brethren in a united and autonomous Poland; the people of Alsace and Lorraine must be allowed to choose the flag under which they will live. Austria-Hungary is, of course, in a worse position even than its partner in crime. Out of the mosaic of nationalities several States will probably emerge. Slavs, Roumans, Italians, and Czecho-Slovaks will naturally gravitate towards their co-nationals, and the Habsburgs must be content with a shrunken realm which may still be based on dualism, or even on trialism, but cannot be permitted to impose

an alien yoke upon peoples whose national aspirations have long been stunted and denied. It is, however, supremely important that the Allies should make it clear beyond the possibility of misunderstanding that the reconstruction of the map, foreshadowed in their published Note,[1] shall be carried out in deference to general principles and not under the monitions of national self-interest or individual ambition. Even so there will be plenty of 'ragged edges'. No settlement can be perfect or permanent. But at least we may avoid some of the errors which vitiated the settlement of 1815, and thereby secure for Europe a period of prolonged if not perpetual peace.

Such a peace can be secured only by the definite annihilation of one ideal of international relations and the acceptance and enthronement of another. To the rule of force there is only one alternative: the rule of law.

The possibility of such a substitution constitutes the simple and supreme issue of the present War. The dim apprehension of that fact has furnished the stimulus and the inspiration to the free peoples who are in league to-day against the Empires whose very existence is a denial of the principle of liberty, a negation of the doctrine of nationality. Is it imaginable that the freedom-loving sons of Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa would have sprung to arms to secure a territorial readjustment in the map of Europe, or even to curtail the dynastic ambition of Hohenzollern or Habsburg? When Germany flung her armies into Belgium it was instinctively realized by every man bred in the traditions of ordered freedom that the Hohenzollern were not merely bullying a weak neighbour, but were seeking to impose upon the world the acceptance of a principle which would ultimately prove destructive alike to national liberty and to international morality. 'The nation which is too weak to defend itself has', so Treitschke thought, 'no right to exist.' Plainly, then, the liberty of the individual nation depends upon the code which governs the relations between States. Shall that code be based upon the rule of force or upon the reign of law? The present agony will decide.

[1] January 1917.

CHAPTER VI

AFTER TWELVE MONTHS: DEMOCRACY, DIPLOMACY, AND WAR

'Do not allow yourself to have your judgement of the *Welthistorische* warped by the accidental, however all-absorbing and terrible that accidental may be.'[1] The warning uttered many years ago by one of the most brilliant of English diplomatists seems to be peculiarly apposite in a time like the present. More particularly should it be taken to heart by the historian who attempts to gauge the significance of contemporary happenings. Any appreciation of passing events must necessarily be provisional; for the contemporary chronicler suffers alike from lack of information and, even more seriously perhaps, from lack of perspective. Yet the chronicler is not without compensating advantages. He is in a far better position for observing and registering variations of political temperature, and for noting the more subtle changes in popular opinion, than the student who must needs rely upon 'sources' and documents.

One such change has obviously taken place in England during the last twelve months.[2] The change is not exactly one from optimism to pessimism; from absurd and irrational over-confidence to equally unreasoning despair. Only in the least informed quarters was there over-confidence a year ago; only in the same quarters is there anything which can fairly be described as pessimism to-day. Nor can the change of temper be ascribed entirely to disillusionment and disappointment.

[1] Sir Robert Morier, *Memoirs*, ii. 227.

[2] The substance of this chapter appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* for October 1915. The text of the article was supplied by the recently published work of Mr. F. S. Oliver, *Ordeal by Battle* (Macmillan, 1915). The date of publication must be carefully borne in mind.

That there has been some disillusionment it would be idle to deny; that there is some ground for disappointment is a proposition too obvious to demand demonstration. On the other hand, there are many features of the situation for which we ought to be profoundly grateful: for the hitherto undisputed supremacy of our sea-power; for the almost complete immunity from attack enjoyed by our oversea trade; for the untiring energy which Lord Kitchener threw into the task of raising a voluntary army not ridiculously contemptible even in the eyes of the great military nations; for the fine response to the call of duty made by a large section of the population at home—whether duty calls to direct military service, or to arduous toil in mine and factory and in the work of transport; above all, for the superb and self-sacrificing loyalty exhibited by the Dominions and the Dependencies. All these things are a source of legitimate satisfaction, if not of pride. Nevertheless, it were both disingenuous and unwise to refuse to recognize that there is another side to the picture, or to deny that there is solid ground for disappointment, and even, in some respects, for humiliation. The whole nation now knows what had long been suspected by the few, that for three years previous to August 1914 war between Great Britain and Germany had been virtually inevitable and had at one time (August 1911) been imminent. It now realizes that between our diplomacy and our military administration there was no sort of correspondence, and that consequently, when the expected actually occurred, we plunged into war without the least attempt—in a strictly military sense—to count the cost. Had Sir John French's gallant little army suffered the fate which as a fact it so narrowly escaped, we should have had no one but ourselves to blame. The splendid tenacity with which that army has maintained a position which for a time was all but untenable has compelled the admiration alike of allies and enemies. Had the expeditionary force yielded before the first fierce onset of the enemy we should have grieved, and we should have suffered, but we could not have wondered or complained. Again: had there been delay in the raising and training of the new armies we should have had little reason for

astonishment. We have never been, in the continental sense, a military nation, and that Lord Kitchener should, even under the stress of war, have gone so far to make us one is a wonderful tribute to his organizing genius and driving power. What does, however, inspire consternation is the fact that a 'nation of shopkeepers' should have shown itself deficient in business capacity; that we should have proved ourselves weak precisely where we thought ourselves strong, and that, confronted by problems of industrial production and commercial organization and distribution, we should hitherto have failed to solve them.

For this failure there have of course been abundant explanations. But whatever the explanation the fact remains that a nation which has believed itself to possess a peculiar genius for the organization of industry, has failed to adapt itself with rapidity and ingenuity to industrial demands which, though novel in direction and unprecedented in volume, ought not to have been beyond the administrative capacity of the greatest industrial and commercial nation in the world. It is, of course, 'nobody's fault'. The business men ascribe the failure to the ascendancy of a clique of political lawyers and complacent bureaucrats; the politicians question the efficiency of the captains of industry; while both parties are inclined to lay the chief blame upon the unbending conservatism of political trade-unionism, and to the *ca' canny* methods of organized labour; but charges and counter-charges against particular classes do not constitute a sufficient answer to the indictment preferred against the nation as a whole.

That which Burke declared to be impossible is impossible no longer. Under an autocracy, or even under an aristocracy, it may be impossible to prefer an indictment against a nation. Under a democracy the case is different. A democracy may fairly be said to get the government it deserves, and to deserve the government it gets. We have been taught that self-reproach is indulgence in a 'shameful pleasure'. Democracies are so little prone to this particular indulgence that the vice may almost merge into a virtue, and, though a class may not frame an indictment against a nation, there is nothing in

reason to prevent a nation from framing an indictment against itself.

Something of this sort is, in fact, taking place, as a result of the retrospect encouraged by the completion of a year of war. Thus the change of sentiment to which allusion has been made is not so much a transition from optimism to pessimism ; from excessive elation and ungrounded expectation to undue depression, disillusionment, and disappointment. It is rather a change from excitement to reflection ; from denunciation to introspection ; from righteous indignation against the atrocious misdeeds of our enemies to a closer and clearer and more critical apprehension of our own shortcomings.

The change is, on the whole, decidedly for the better. Denunciation of the wickedness of opponents may conduce to personal satisfaction, but it will not really help to win the War. A stern and reasoned conviction as to the righteousness of the cause for which we fight is a moral asset of incalculable value ; but though we may trust in God to defend the right we must not neglect to keep our powder dry.

In Richard II, a superb study of character, Shakespeare has pointed the moral for us. We do not like the 'vile politician', Henry Bolingbroke. We are not meant to like him. We are repelled by his cold and calculating character, by his treacherous policy towards his kinsman, by his political craft. On the other hand, we cannot wholly resist a feeling of attraction towards that 'sweet lovely rose', Richard of Bordeaux, weak and sentimental though he be. Yet by the hard, inexorable and remorseless logic of facts we are compelled to give a considered verdict in accordance with Shakespeare's summing up. He knows on which side our sentiments will lie ; he shares them to the full. The duty which he has to perform is a painful one ; yet he does not shrink from it ; Richard, the anointed of the Lord, is deposed and dies a violent death ; for the anointed of the Lord has betrayed his trust, and has neglected the obvious material precautions against the wiles of a clever, crafty, and determined foe. Thus Richard of Bordeaux fails. Henry of Lancaster succeeds ; but success, thus attained, brings neither satisfaction nor content :

God knows, my son,
By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways
I met this crown; and I myself know well
How troublesome it sat upon my head.

It was indeed 'an honour snatched with boistrous hand'. But the crown snatched by Henry Bolingbroke had already fallen from the brow of Richard of Bordeaux. His weakness as a man, his failure as a king, was clearly demonstrated in the great scene on the coast of Wales, where Richard had just landed on his return from Ireland. He had come too late; yet he is all elation:

I weep for joy,
To stand upon my kingdom once again.—
Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,
Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs:
As a long parted mother with her child
Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,
So, weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,
And do thee favour with my royal hands.

Then, noting perhaps some signs of impatience among his followers:

Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords:
This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones
Prove armèd soldiers, ere her native king
Shall falter under foul rebellion's arms.

The old Bishop of Carlisle bluntly reminds his sentimental sovereign that God helps them who help themselves:

The means that Heaven yields must be embrac'd
And not neglected; else, if Heaven would
And we will not, Heaven's offer we refuse,
The proffer'd means of succour and redress.

But Richard will have none of this rationalistic philosophy: Bolingbroke's are the works of darkness, his triumph will be dissipated as the morning mist before the rising sun of monarchy:

Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord.

From this extreme of confidence he is plunged, by the arrival of bad news, into the depths of unmanly despair:

> Of comfort no man speak.
> Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs.
> For God's sake let us sit upon the ground,
> And tell sad stories of the death of kings.

Richard II is superbly typical of the inefficient sentimentalist; he is an amateur in the art of life; and especially in the art of statesmanship. Henry IV, personally much less amiable and attractive, is an artist. He does not shrink from looking facts in the face. He wills not only the end, but the means. He knows precisely what he wants, and he knows how he means to get it. He does not waste time in apostrophes when he ought to be sharpening his sword; he does not seek to curry favour with his enemies, as Richard does, by bearing heavily upon his friends—a temptation to which weak men are particularly prone; he does not expect to gather grapes from thorns, still less does he expect them to fall into his lap from the sky; if he wants grapes he plants vines. Like a true artist, he seeks his ends by the means appropriate to them and not to some other end. He cultivates, in short, the scientific temper, the temper which looks for certain effects to follow certain causes.

The contrasted types of character suggested by Richard of Bordeaux and Henry Bolingbroke—the attractive sentimentalist and the repellent but efficient expert—still divide between them the world of affairs. Thus the keen-sighted German critic felicitously imagined by Mr. Frederick Oliver in his *Ordeal by Battle* is quick to contrast the 'quiet experts' who virtually rule Germany through its civil service with the 'loquacious amateurs' whom he supposes to be dominant in Great Britain. 'Our civil service, which you are pleased to describe as a Bureaucracy, is', he contends, 'distinguished among all others existing at the present time, by the calibre of its members, by its efficiency and honesty, by its poverty and not less by the honour in which it is held notwithstanding its poverty.' He boasts that so far Germany has 'succeeded in maintaining public officials of all grades in

higher popular respect than men who devote their lives to building up private fortunes and also to those others who delight and excel in interminable debate'. 'With you', he adds, caustically but not untruly,

'the fame of the showy amateur fills the mouths of the public. We, on the contrary, exalt the expert, the man who has been trained to the job he undertakes. In so doing we may be reactionaries and you may be progressives; but the progress of Germany since 1870—a progress in which we are everywhere either already in front of you or else treading closely on your heels—does not seem to furnish you with a conclusive argument.'

With the argument of 'Baron von Hexenküchen' we may profitably contrast the views of a friendly neutral[1]—now President of Harvard University. Reviewing English institutions some seven or eight years ago, Mr. Laurence Lowell found the secret of English efficiency—the secret of the success of self-government in England—in the felicitous combination of amateur and professional, of layman and expert: the co-operation of the great unpaid and the professional clerk to the Justices; the professional judge and the amateur jury; the Cabinet Minister and the permanent official; the lay Chairman of a Railway Company and the expert General Manager—and so forth. The point is not a novel one. Sir George Cornewall Lewis observed many years ago: 'It is not the business of a Cabinet Minister to work his Department. His business is to see that it is properly worked.' But though not novel the generalization comes with peculiar force from an exceptionally competent and 'outside' critic of English Institutions.[2]

Is President Lowell right, or is Mr. Oliver right? The approbation of the former, it is proper to point out, refers to a period anterior to that which has incurred the special opprobrium of the latter. *Ordeal by Battle* is primarily an exposure of the shortcomings which characterized the 'squalid episode' in the history of English politics which filled the

[1] Written, be it remembered, in 1915.

[2] *The Government of England*, by A. Laurence Lowell (1908), vol. I, c. viii.

period between 1905 and 1914. In effect, however, if not in form, it is a singularly incisive indictment of the methods of 'Democracy', more particularly in relation to diplomacy and national defence. Democracy must, as Mr. Oliver justly contends, be judged, like any other form of government, by results. Popular government is to-day standing its trial:

'No nation, unless it be utterly mad, will retain a form of government which from some inherent defect is unable to protect itself against external attack. Is democratic government capable of looking ahead, making adequate and timely preparation, calling for and obtaining from its people the sacrifices which are necessary in order to preserve their own existence? Can it recover ground which has been lost, and maintain a long, costly, and arduous struggle, until, by victory, it has placed national security beyond the reach of danger?'

The answer which the author would himself be inclined to give to these searching questions may perhaps be inferred from the following passage:

'When a people becomes so self-complacent that it mistakes its own ignorance for omniscience—so jealous of authority and impatient of contradiction that it refuses to invest with more than a mere shadow of power those whose business it is to govern—when the stock of leadership gives out, or remains hidden and undiscovered under a litter of showy refuse—when those who succeed in pushing themselves to the front are chiefly concerned not to lead, but merely to act the part of leaders 'in silver slippers and amid applause'—when the chiefs of parties are so fearful of unpopularity that they will not assert their own opinions, or utter timely warnings, or proclaim what they know to be the truth—when such things as these come to pass, the nation has reached that state which was dreaded by the framers of the American Constitution and which—intending to warn mankind against it—they branded as "Democracy".'

In the present War there is, of course, much more at stake than a particular form of government. Still, as Mr. Oliver insists, it is in effect, if not in intention, a war against democracy. For democracy, as a form of government, could not survive the defeat of the Allies; it could not even survive their failure to achieve complete and decisive victory. And the English democracy, albeit much more tardily than that

of France, or of Serbia, more tardily even than that of Italy, would seem to be awakening to the fact. But what is the condition of success? There is no obscurity about Mr. Oliver's answer to this question. The nation must find a Man, and the Man must tell the nation the truth. 'Democracy', he says truly, 'is by no means invincible.' Before it can conquer 'it must find a leader who is worthy of its trust'.

'Leadership is our greatest present need, and it is here that the Party System has played us false. To manipulate its vast and intricate machinery there arose a great demand for expert mechanicians, and these have been evolved in a rich profusion. But, in a crisis like the present, mechanicians will not serve our purpose. The real need is a Man, who by the example of his own courage, vigour, certainty, and steadfastness will draw out the highest qualities of the people; whose resolute sense of duty will brush opportunism aside; whose sympathy and truthfulness will stir the heart and hold fast the conscience of the nation. Leadership of this sort we have lacked.'

Mr. Oliver's interesting and vigorous essay gives rise to many reflections, and challenges an answer to several obstinate questions. Is the form of government really a matter of supreme moment? Is it of primary importance in the sphere of diplomacy and the conduct of war? If so, is democracy at a proved disadvantage as compared with autocracy or aristocracy? Are the shortcomings which seem to Mr. Oliver to be revealed by the experience of the last ten years the inevitable result of the democratization of our institutions, or may they rather be ascribed to the peculiar circumstances under which, in England, the democratic experiment has been attempted? What is the real test of the success of any particular constitution? Is there any valid reason to apprehend that democracy will fail to respond to the test? Assuming failure, is there any ground for the supposition that any other system would yield better results? Questions such as these naturally arise and might be indefinitely multiplied. With none of them is it possible to deal exhaustively or even adequately within the limits of this chapter. But discussion, though summary, may not be wholly unprofitable.

To the question as to the importance of the form of government political philosophers have given answers unusually diverse even for philosophers. The gamut extends from Aristotle to Pope. The latter dismissed the whole problem in the familiar couplet:

> For forms of government let fools contest:
> Whate'er is best administered is best.

To Aristotle, on the contrary, the question seemed to be of supreme moment. Nor was his solicitude unintelligible. In the Greek City-State everything depended upon the form of the polity. The constitution stood to the State as the soul to the body. The identity of the State depended, therefore, not, as with us, upon identity of territory but upon the continuity of the constitution. Upon the form of the government depended also the character of the educational system, for education 'must be relative to the polity'. Most important of all: the constitution determined the character of the individual citizen. 'The virtue of the citizen is relative to the polity.' To the modern publicist these are hard sayings. To the Greek philosophers they were a commonplace. 'Each constitution embodied', as Newman says, 'a scheme of life, and tended consciously or not to bring the lives of those living under it into harmony with its particular scheme.'[1] This intimate interdependence of ethics and politics was not impossible of practical realization in the tiny City-State of Greece. Calvin, too, hoped to achieve it, in the City-State of Geneva. In the vast Nation-States of the modern world, the connexion between the ἦθος of the constitution and the life and character of the individual citizen is necessarily less intimate. Nevertheless, there is ground for the belief that even in the modern State there is a close connexion between structure and policy. 'No State', said Treitschke, 'is entitled to renounce that egotism which belongs to its sovereignty.' The 'egotism which belongs to its sovereignty' would seem to be the Teutonic equivalent for the ἦθος of the constitution, to which Aristotle, like his German disciple, attributed such supreme importance.

[1] *Politics of Aristotle*, i. 209.

Modern writers have, as a rule, exhibited some impatience with the time-honoured debate as to the best type of constitution. There is, says the scientific historian of the Positivist School, no 'best type'. There is no single type equally appropriate to all States at all stages in their political development. The excellence of a constitution is a matter not of abstract and universal theory, but of applicability to the environment of the particular State. In this matter the Positivist surely has reason on his side. To assume, for example, as some are apt to do, that the peculiar type of democracy—and English democracy is in many respects *sui generis*—which has in the course of centuries been gradually evolved in this country is applicable to all countries, at all times, at all stages, betrays both ignorance of history and characteristic lack of imagination. Nevertheless, though we may not presume to say that the particular form of polity to which evolution has brought us in this country is abstractedly superior to other forms, there is a presumption that it is the form best adapted, for the time being, to our own peculiar circumstances.

But this presumption is obviously conditional. The condition is that the constitution is apt to fulfil the first political law—that of self-preservation. In the modern international economy self-preservation depends, in the first instance, upon skilful diplomacy, and ultimately upon the adequacy of national defence.

How has the democratic constitution of modern England fulfilled this condition? How has it responded to the test? To this question Mr. Oliver's answer is unequivocal. Our diplomacy, though transparently well-intentioned, has been as unskilful as our military preparations have been inadequate. Worse still: there has been complete lack of correspondence between policy and armaments. And the blame for this he imputes not to the personality of a Foreign Secretary, to whose high-mindedness and integrity he pays a tribute as ample as it is just, but to the condition of domestic politics and the mischievous ascendancy of the party system.

Can 'democracy' be held responsible for these shortcomings?

Before attempting to answer this question, it is important to remember that even 'democracies' do not all conform to a single type. The Swiss type, for example, differs fundamentally from our own. The Swiss Confederation exists to prove that the party system, as we understand it, is by no means the necessary complement of a democratic constitution, and that the highest type of individual liberty is consistent with the universal obligation of military service. Into the Swiss executive the idea of party has never, I believe, intruded. Certain it is that party mutations in the legislature in no-wise affect the personnel of the executive. Nor has it ever been suggested in Switzerland that personal freedom involves exemption from the liability to take a share in national defence. There are, of course, many other points of contrast between English and Swiss democracy: the most obvious being the fact that the former is unitary and the latter federal. But even more important is the fact that while English democracy is *representative*, Swiss democracy, like that of the Greek City-States, is in no inconsiderable degree *direct*. The latter principle obtains in lesser degree in the United States, and even more conspicuously in the Australian Commonwealth.

Generalization in politics is proverbially dangerous; yet the mention in close conjunction of the Swiss Confederation and Australian Commonwealth might seem to suggest that the successful working of democratic institutions is not unrelated to the size of the State or rather of the population. That the Greek philosophers held this view is, of course, notorious. To Aristotle the size of the State was of pre-eminent importance. A State of some fifty thousand citizens was, in his judgement, ideal. Ten thousand were inadequate to that self-sufficiency which he predicated as essential: one hundred thousand tended to degenerate into a mob. In the great Nation-States of the modern world democracy has necessarily assumed a representative character. Has it, under this necessity, lost some element essential to its completeness and success? Swiss publicists would answer this question with an emphatic affirmative. Indeed, in their scientific literature the term 'democracy' is

employed as the antithesis of 'representative government'. The point, though it cannot be elaborated, is unmistakably suggestive. It might be regarded, perhaps, as tiresomely academic, were it not that federalism is at hand to suggest a practical if partial reconciliation. It should not, however, escape observation that the democracies of Switzerland and of Australia, alike small in population, alike federal in type, alike in some measure 'direct', are alike also in the acceptance of the primary obligation of citizenship. 'A democracy', says Mr. Oliver, 'which asserts the right of manhood suffrage while denying the duty of manhood service is living in a fool's paradise' (p. 400). Neither the democracy of Switzerland nor that of Australia (to say nothing of France) is obnoxious to this charge.

In England, on the contrary, the people have been not merely permitted but encouraged to select this particular site for their habitation. This is the real gravamen of the charge preferred by Mr. Oliver against the political leaders of the English democracy. Rather than risk the ingathering of an abundant harvest of domestic and social reforms, or, as a less friendly critic might put it, rather than risk the loss of the possession or the prospect of office, our politicians have deliberately withheld from the people, whom they affect to trust, a knowledge of facts which the people, if really sovereign, had a right to know, and which politicians with a single eye to national security would not have hesitated to divulge. A graver indictment could not be preferred against politicians.

To this indictment there are only two possible answers: first, that a revelation of the facts would have accentuated the danger and might have precipitated the War, which it was the supreme object of English diplomacy to avoid; and, secondly, that the proposal of the only remedy appropriate to the actual situation revealed by the publication of the facts would have provoked a social revolution. In other words, the politicians can rebut the grave charge preferred against themselves only by framing an indictment against the nation.

Is there a true bill? Detailed investigation must be deferred to a more convenient season, but it must be confessed

that the proceedings at the Trade Union Congress at Bristol (September 1915)—despite obvious and praiseworthy restraint—and still more the language employed by one or more leaders of organized labour in the House of Commons, do unfortunately afford some justification for an affirmative answer.

Let us assume, for the moment, that the Trade Union Congress—occasionally described with some grandiloquence as the 'Parliament of Labour'—does fairly represent the considered opinion of the aristocracy of the manual workers of the country. That Congress, by an almost unanimous vote, expressed its belief that 'all the men necessary can and will be obtained through a voluntary system properly organized', while the President of the Miners' Federation went so far as to say, amid approving cheers, that 'it will be the duty of organized labour to prevent conscription taking place'. That the dislike of conscription is not due to any wish to evade personal responsibility for the defence of the country is proved by the magnificent response made by the working classes to the call for voluntary recruits. On the other hand, it is probably true that the magnitude of the task before us is even now imperfectly realized by the wage-earning as by other classes.

Lack of imagination has always been a prominent characteristic of the English people. Relatively remote from the actual scene of the conflict, it is not easy for us to apprehend either its magnitude or its ferocity. The power to do so postulates not only a vivid imagination, but full and accurate information. The former is denied to us by nature, the latter is intercepted by authority. But apart from these deficiencies common to all classes, the men represented at the Trade Union Congress are inspired, in their opposition to compulsory service, by a motive which is a natural derivative from the organization of which they form part. Trade unionism, which may fairly be regarded as the economic complement of political democracy, has, from the first, proposed to itself two main objects: on the one hand, to maintain an organization for the purpose of collective bargaining with the employers; and, on the other, to improve in every way possible, the conditions of labour, more particularly though not exclusively

by obtaining for it a larger and larger share in the product of industry.

The opposition of trade unionism to compulsory service to-day is prompted by the same reasons that have led trade unionists to oppose compulsory arbitration in the past.

The leaders of political trade unionism are afraid that if compulsion is applied in respect of military service, it will, during war-time, be applied also to industrial service, and they are apprehensive lest the whole of the complicated and elaborate machinery of trade unionism should, in the process, be seriously dislocated and perhaps permanently damaged. The apprehension is, from the point of view of men whose whole being is saturated with class-consciousness, not merely natural but intelligible. Conscription—the application of the principle of compulsion to the service of the citizen on the field of battle as in the field of industry—would unquestionably revolutionize for the time being the entire relation at present subsisting between the individual and the State. This truth is perceived, somewhat confusedly perhaps, by 'labour', and its perception is at the back of the demand that if the State claims the right to dictate to the individual labourer, the manner in which he shall employ his labour, and the amount of remuneration he shall obtain for it, the State shall also dictate to the capitalist the direction in which he shall employ his capital and the amount of remuneration that capital may earn. Nor can it be denied that there is both logic and equity in the contention. Certainly it is not disputed by the possessors of capital; though in applying the principle it must always be remembered that 'labour' possesses an element of fluidity and mobility which does not by any means invariably attach to 'capital'. A sudden demand for the transfer of capital from one employment to another might result simply in its destruction. Nevertheless, in principle, the demands of the State must be conceded in the one case as promptly as in the other.

Those who, like the Swiss peasants or our own fellow countrymen in Australia, believe that the duty of manhood service is the corollary of the right of manhood suffrage, may find it difficult to comprehend, and still more difficult to justify, the

attitude of organized labour in this country. It is, in truth, impossible to do either without realizing that English trade unionism is itself one of the peculiar products of that inflexible individualism which dominated English thought and English politics during the middle years of the nineteenth century—the period in which trade unionism was painfully struggling for a recognized place in the industrial economy. That the trade unionists of to-day would deny their paternity and would repudiate with derision any affinity to individualism is likely enough. But it is, nevertheless, abundantly clear that they have not grasped the fundamental principle of Collectivism. With many of the economic applications of the latter principle no one has less sympathy than the present writer; but it is obvious that the State must, in war, temporarily assume responsibilities and perform functions which, in days of peace, are properly left to individuals. Various sections of the people have eagerly acclaimed the partial application of this principle; it is clear that no section has yet grasped its integral significance. Until it is grasped by the nation as a whole there is no chance of bringing a great war to a successful issue, whether the form of the polity be democratic, aristocratic, or autocratic. In this respect, at any rate, the form of government is unimportant. War necessarily involves the unquestioned supremacy of the State, and in war the State itself can survive only by committing the supreme direction of affairs to a very small number of individuals, preferably to one. For the time being these men or this man must be virtually autocratic. The problem is to find the man.

The question under discussion would seem, then, to narrow itself. Under what particular form of government is it most easy to find the man? The apologists of democracy are fond of pointing to the example of the first French Republic triumphant over the monarchical coalition which was opposed to it. How far does this example go to prove the capacity of democracy for the conduct of a great war? It would be impossible to analyse the many causes which contributed to the remarkable success of French arms during the period between the fall of the monarchy and the advent of Napoleon.

But one may be noted. Out of the agony of the Terror there emerged two men of genius: Danton, who dared everything to save France, and Carnot, perhaps the greatest organizer of war that ever lived. If, however, we are to appeal from theory to experience, the appeal may more conveniently be confined to the history of our own country.

Until 1688 England was ruled by a personal monarch; the aristocracy were supreme in affairs until 1832; democracy has been a fact only since 1867, or it would be safer to say since 1885. During the period of personal monarchy there was only one great international struggle in which England was seriously engaged. Until the close of the Middle Ages there were no international wars for the simple reason that except England there was not in Western Europe any nation. The Hundred Years' War was not a contest between the English and French nations. The French nation had not yet come into existence. It was a feudal struggle between the King of Paris supported by some of his feudatories against other feudatories, led by the most powerful among them, who happened also to occupy the English throne and was thus able to bring into the field his English subjects. The first great international war was that between France and the Austro-Spanish Habsburgs. The first in which England took a serious part was the contest with Spain which culminated in the Armada fight. But the latter contest was fought, except for one or two desultory and unimportant expeditions to the Low Countries, entirely at sea. Not until the Revolution of 1688 and the accession of the Dutch Stadtholder to the English throne did England, as a nation, take a leading part in military operations on the Continent or overseas.

The Second Hundred Years' War with France, begun in 1689, ended only with Wellington's victory on the field of Waterloo. During the whole of that period English politics were dominated by a small knot of great territorial magnates. How did we fare as regards diplomacy and war under the rule of an aristocracy? It might be inferred from a bare statement of the facts that the aristocratic governments of the eighteenth century were especially prone to military enter-

prise. But the inference, though natural, would be directly contrary to the truth. The territorial magnates were not as a class naturally inclined either towards a 'spirited foreign policy', or towards participation in continental wars. The Tories among them belonged mostly, if we may accept the testimony of Bolingbroke and Swift, to the 'blue-water school'. The Whig magnates, on the other hand, carried on the political traditions of William III, believing with him that the preservation of the domestic liberties of England was inconsistent with the ascendancy of the Bourbons in Europe.

The so-called wars of the League of Augsburg and the Spanish Succession were due—apart from the masterful personality of William III—to the conviction of Louis XIV that in order to dominate the continent of Europe he must secure a controlling influence in the domestic affairs of England. Thus William III was able to convince the English Whigs that if they would preserve domestic liberty they must circumscribe Bourbon supremacy upon the Continent. The success of English arms in the first round of the contest (1689–1713) must be ascribed to the fact that in the person of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, we produced a man as skilful in diplomacy as he was brilliant in war.

The second and more important round (1739–63) was, as regards English intervention, purely commercial and colonial in origin. The commercial classes were by this time becoming an important element in the Whig party. Their appetite for oversea trade had been whetted by the commercial concessions made to us by Spain and embodied in the Treaty of Utrecht. The renewal of the war against the Bourbons was directly due to commercial rivalry, leading to repeated 'incidents' in the southern seas. The first half of the war, ended by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), brought little advantage to either side. The critical portion of the struggle was still to come. It opened with a threefold attack on the part of France and a threefold disaster suffered by England.

If any antidote be needed to the feeling of disappointment engendered by the net results of the first twelve months of the present War, it may most surely be derived from a glance at

the history of the first twelve months of the most brilliantly successful war ever waged by this country. The opening scene of that war was marked by a terrible reverse to English arms in the Ohio Valley, where General Braddock was defeated and killed. That defeat filled the nation with well-grounded alarm for the safety of all its possessions in North America. Hardly had it recovered from the shock administered by the news of Braddock's defeat, when from the Mediterranean there came the news that one of our two vantage points—the island of Minorca—had, thanks to the ineptitude of Admiral Byng, been captured by the Duc de Richelieu. From India came the news that Calcutta had fallen to Surajah Dowlah, the senseless tyrant who inflicted upon a band of English residents the terrible sufferings of the Black Hole. Nearer home, too, the situation was equally discouraging, for the Duke of Cumberland had been compelled to sign at Kloster-Seven an engagement to disband his forces and to take no further part in the war.

Still more depressing and alarming was the condition of affairs in England. The 'doge' of the 'Venetian oligarchy' was the Duke of Newcastle, who, in 1754, had succeeded to the place vacated by his much abler brother Henry Pelham, solely by virtue of his influence in the small borough constituencies whose representatives filled the House of Commons. Newcastle, a man 'not fit to be chamberlain in the smallest of German Courts', was utterly dismayed by the outbreak of war and still more by the succession of disasters which fell upon his country. He turned for help to Pitt, but Pitt was not minded either to serve under Newcastle or to cover his retreat. By the autumn of 1756 the cup of Newcastle's unpopularity was full, and the streets of London resounded with the cry 'to the block with Newcastle and to the yard-arm with Byng'. In November, Newcastle resigned, and Pitt took office under the nominal leadership of the Duke of Devonshire. But he held it only until April 1757. Pitt was the idol of the populace; but popular support availed little. No ministry could maintain itself in the House of Commons unless it enjoyed the sanction of Newcastle and the favour of the King. The Pitt-

Devonshire Ministry enjoyed neither, and in April 1757 it was dismissed.

For eleven weeks—from April until June 29—the country was without a ministry. Well might the stoutest hearts be filled with the presage of disaster. 'Whoever is in, or whoever is out,' said Lord Chesterfield, 'I am sure we are undone both at home and abroad. . . . We are no longer a nation. I never yet saw so dreadful a prospect.' 'It is time', said Horace Walpole, 'for England to slip her cables and float away into some unknown ocean.' 'The Empire is no more' was Pitt's own comment.

From an intolerable situation there was only one possible means of escape, and Pitt perceived and seized it. He 'borrowed Newcastle's majority' to carry on the Government. In this way he was able to rule England for four years (1757–61), virtually as a dictator. In those four years the foundations of English supremacy were firmly laid in India; the destiny of North America was determined; and the danger of a Bourbon ascendancy was finally dissipated in Europe. Only the greatest of men could, under the conditions, have achieved such results. 'England', said Frederick the Great, 'has been long in labour, but at last she has produced a man.' And the man had complete confidence in himself. 'I know that I can save this country and that no one else can.' 'I want to call England out of that enervate state in which 20,000 men from France can shake her.' The response to his call was immediate and effective. In Macaulay's glowing phrase, 'the ardour of his soul set the whole kingdom on fire. It inflamed every soldier who dragged the cannon up the heights of Quebec, and every sailor who boarded the French ships among the rocks of Brittany.' This was the secret of Pitt's success—the magnetism of his personality. His courage, too, was superb; his disinterestedness unquestioned; his patriotism at once passionate and pure. 'He loved England as an Athenian loved the city of the violet crown.'

The Empire saved by Pitt was in large measure lost by George III. The Peace of Paris of 1763 and that of 1783 marked respectively the zenith and the nadir of our Imperial

fortunes. 'This', said Lord Granville in 1763, 'has been the most glorious war and the most triumphant peace that England ever knew.' That of 1783 was the most shameful. But within twelve months the younger Pitt had entered on his long tenure of office. His genius, though hardly less great, was quite unlike his father's. He had little natural aptitude for the conduct of war, and his military policy during the first years of the struggle with republican and Napoleonic France was full of blunders. None the less it was his serenity, his courage, and his tenacity which made the final victory sure. The same qualities were conspicuous in Castlereagh, upon whom his mantle fell and by whom his work was completed. Marlborough, Chatham, Pitt, Castlereagh, Nelson, Wellington—these were the men thrown up by the oligarchy of the eighteenth century, and by them our most brilliant triumphs, alike in war and diplomacy, were achieved.

From the above survey, rough and summary though it has been, there would seem to emerge one or two points which are not without significance to-day. The first is, that even in a period marked by great triumphs and conspicuous for great men there were some very black hours. One such was the crisis of 1756–7, which it has seemed worth while to examine in some detail; another occurred in 1780–2, when we lost the thirteen colonies in North America, when we all but lost India and our Mediterranean power, and when Ireland wrested from nerveless and impotent hands her legislative independence; a third was the crisis of 1797. Another point would seem to be that in military, as opposed to naval, operations, it takes us some time to get into our stride. In a word, we are bad starters. It was so in 1756, and again, even more conspicuously, in and after 1793. Nor is this unintelligible. We have never pretended to be a military nation, and though the navy is always ready for action, the army as a rule is not. In this respect the aristocracy of the eighteenth century differs little from democracy of the twentieth. Whether, in the midst of nations which are military, and face to face with an enemy which has challenged, and unless beaten in the present War, will continue to challenge, our whole position in the world, we

can still afford to remain an unarmed people is too large a question for discussion at the close of this chapter.

A third point which emerges clearly enough from a survey of the eighteenth century is that the strength of an oligarchy is its capacity for the production of leaders. Nor was this capacity demonstrated only by the aristocracy of the older England. It was equally apparent in the new. What chance would the Puritan States have had against the mother country in the American Revolt but for the leadership supplied by the Virginian aristocracy? The military blunders committed by the British commanders in that fratricidal conflict were almost beyond belief, but despite those blunders the confederate armies must again and again have been annihilated but for the tenacity, the resourcefulness, and skill of George Washington.

Salvation, then, would seem to depend, whatever the precise form of the polity, upon two interdependent conditions: the existence of leaders who are not afraid to lead, and the ability of the mass of the nation to discern true leadership and its readiness to follow.

According to the classical theory, it is the characteristic weakness of democracy to be unable to fulfil these conditions. It is apt to produce tyrants, and it is not infertile in demagogues, as *The Knights* of Aristophanes will always live to remind us. Another peculiarity of democracy, according to the same theory, is the prevalence of a false conception of 'freedom' and 'equality'—the notion that 'freedom and equality mean the doing what a man likes'. But this, says Aristotle, is wrong: 'men should not think it slavery to live according to the rule of the constitution; for it is their salvation.'[1] The admonition addressed by Demosthenes to the Athenian democracy is more stern. 'Take care lest in trying to get rid of war you find yourselves slaves.' The antithesis is striking. Military service is the corollary of freedom. But enough, it may be said, of ancient saws and of classical theory. The democracy of modern England is not that of Demosthenic or Aristotelian Athens. The

[1] *Politics*, v. 9, 14.

reminder is pertinent, but the implied argument is double-edged.

That the environment and conditions of ancient Athens were fundamentally different from those of modern England is obviously true. A City-State as compared with a world-wide Empire; the limitation of citizenship to freemen; the economic substratum supplied by slavery; the direct form of democracy as compared with representative government—these and other circumstances should unquestionably induce caution in instituting comparisons, but they do not entirely vitiate them. There is another caution which should equally be borne in mind. It was impressed upon our grandfathers by no less an authority than John Stuart Mill:

'Democracy is too recent a phenomenon and of too great magnitude for any one who now lives to comprehend its consequences. A few of its more immediate tendencies may be perceived or surmised; what other tendencies destined to overrule or to combine with them lie behind there are not grounds even to conjecture. . . . It is not, therefore, without a deep sense of the uncertainty attaching to such predictions that the wise would hazard an opinion as to the fate of mankind under the new democratic dispensation.'[1]

Precisely three-quarters of a century have elapsed since Mill penned these words. But they are still true and still apposite. The 'democratic dispensation' is even yet relatively new. We cannot yet comprehend its consequences. There are not yet sufficient grounds for conjecture.

Still, the fact is sufficiently obvious that the modern world, and in particular the English race, is engaged in the trial of an experiment without precedent or parallel in the experience of mankind. We English folk, dispersed in distant homes, are attempting to administer not merely a City-State like Athens, not merely a Nation-State of the ordinary modern type, but a World-Empire the several parts of which are at different stages in political, economic, and social development. And we are attempting to administer it under the ultimate sovereignty of a scarcely veiled democracy, and, for the most part, by means of democratic machinery. This experiment

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, October 1840.

is new; and if we were able to take up a point of observation scientifically detached we should watch it with the interest and curiosity which similar experiments in politics have been wont to command. Such detachment is, however, impossible to an Englishman; nor, at a time like the present, will the required point of observation be easily found elsewhere.

This World-Empire is in the pangs of a struggle for existence. In the battle of the nations there is, of course, much more at stake than any particular form of government. But among other issues this, if not the most vital, is not the least interesting. It is a testing time for many things; among them for democracy. A popular dictatorship secured us against the onslaught of Spanish despotism in the sixteenth century. In the eighteenth century a genuine aristocracy brought us triumphant out of the prolonged contest with France—with a France, monarchical, republican, and imperialist in turn. In the twentieth century the English democracy, in close alliance with the peoples of France, Russia, Serbia, Italy, and Japan, finds itself at death-grips with a people who have cheerfully confided their political fortunes to a military autocracy. In the first bout of the contest that autocracy has enjoyed all the advantages which naturally accrue from many years of conscious, careful, and sustained preparation; nor has it failed to make full and profitable use of them. Can the English democracy, in conjunction with its allies, make good the lost time and recover the lost ground? If it can, it will not merely have preserved and vindicated its own existence, it will also have responded triumphantly to the severest test ever imposed upon a particular form of polity.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROBLEM OF SMALL NATIONS AND BIG STATES

'The supreme touchstone of efficiency in imperial government lies in its capacity to preserve the small state in the great union.'—H. A. L. FISHER.

THE cult of the Small Nation is once more in the ascendant. Of this fact there are numerous and unmistakable indications. Nor is the reason far to seek. The re-emergence of the Balkan States after centuries of submersion; the heroic resistance and the patient suffering of Belgium; the splendid fight which Serbia made against overwhelming odds; the encouragement given by the proclamation of the Grand Duke Nicholas to the national aspirations of the Poles—all these have touched the imagination and evoked the sympathy of a large part of the civilized world. There would seem, however, to be a somewhat more subtle reason for the revival of interest in the smaller nationalities. The Great War has already administered a severe shock to many complacent minds; it has disturbed many prepossessions and has dissipated many prejudices. Most people, indeed, have, during the last six months,[1] been engaged, consciously or unconsciously, in an attempt to readjust the intellectual focus. Nor has the process been entirely painless. Especially has it been painful to those who learnt their lessons of history and politics—and which of us did not?—from the apostles of the Teutonic school. There is, for example, a touch of pathos in the postscript suffixed by Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher to the Preface of his recently published *Making of Western Europe*.[2] 'I let the text of this book stand . . . as a penance,

[1] First published—in substance—in the *Fortnightly Review* for February 1915.

[2] London: John Murray, 1914.

to be imposed upon myself for the hard things which I have written in it about the Slavonic nations and for the high praise that I have given to the efforts of the medieval emperors to destroy or germanize the Slavs.' Mr. Fletcher expresses with characteristic courage and candour what many people are feeling. I do not, for one instant, suggest that all the lessons learnt in the Teutonic school will have to be unlearnt. On the contrary, it is certain that the message of a man like Stubbs or Seeley contains in it elements of indestructible value. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the student will be compelled to look at ascertained facts through a new lens; to find for familiar phenomena a fresh interpretation.

With Bishop Stubbs's famous vindication of the Teutonic basis of English society and English institutions this essay is not directly concerned. There would seem to be much sense and some safety in the audacious but immortal jingle with which Defoe confounded the captious critics of his patron 'Dutch' William:

> For Englishmen to boast of generation
> Cancels their knowledge and lampoons the nation.
> A true-born Englishman's a contradiction,
> In speech an irony, in fact a fiction;
>
> . . . . . .
>
> A metaphor invented to express
> A man akin to all the universe.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The Romans first with Julius Caesar came,
> Including all the nations of that name,
> Gauls, Greeks and Lombards and, by computation,
> Auxiliaries or slaves of every nation.
> With Hengist, Saxons; Danes, with Sueno came,
> In search of plunder, not in search of fame.
> Scots, Picts, and Irish from Hibernian shore,
> And conquering William brought the Normans o'er.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> From this amphibious ill-born mob began
> That vain ill-natured thing an Englishman.
> The customs, surnames, languages and manners
> Of all these nations are their own explainers:

Whose relics are so lasting and so strong
They ha' left a shibboleth upon our tongue,
By which with easy search you may distinguish
Your Roman-Saxon-Danish-Norman-English.[1]

This oblique reference to an ancient controversy is made for a particular reason. It is undeniable that the teaching of Stubbs, Kemble, Freeman, J. R. Green, and other English apostles of the Teutonic school had a very important political influence. It predisposed the minds of their disciples to an active sympathy with Bismarck's astounding achievement, the unification of Germany under the hegemony of Prussia.

More than this. It encouraged the cult of the great Nation-State. In this respect the work of Stubbs at Oxford was powerfully seconded by that of Seeley at Cambridge. The two men were poles asunder, in their opinions, in their habits of mind, and in their historical methods. But the political effect of Seeley's teaching was curiously complementary, in one respect, to that of Stubbs. The latter was more concerned with the *Germania* of Tacitus; the former with the Germany of Napoleon and Stein. Stubbs was the disciple of Maurer; Seeley of Ranke; but both were saturated with Teutonic scholarship, and both were Teutonic in sympathy and outlook. The following passage may be cited in illustration from Seeley's *Life and Times of Stein*—his greatest though not his best-known book:

'The three principal wars of Prussia since her great disaster (at Jena), those waged in 1813, in 1866, and in 1870, have a character of greatness such as no other wars have. They have, in a manner, reconciled the modern world to war, for they have exhibited it as a civilizing agent and a kind of teacher of morals.'

In regard to the war of Liberation (1813) the claim was not, perhaps, extravagant; it is much more doubtful as regards that of 1870, and how Seeley could ever have brought himself to write thus of the war of 1866 now passes comprehension. In fairness, it should be remembered that the secrets of Bismarck's diplomacy had not then been revealed; still less could Seeley have anticipated the *reductio ad absurdum* of

[1] *The True-born Englishman.*

his argument contained in the works of Treitschke and Bernhardi.

The argument of the *Life of Stein* is, however, entirely consonant with that of Seeley's much more famous book, *The Expansion of England* (1883). The latter was one of the few books of the nineteenth century which can literally be described as 'epoch-making'. Its effect upon political thought is fairly comparable to that produced upon economic thought, a century earlier, by Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Like the *Stein* it tended to the exaltation of the big State. It is true that Seeley was careful to insist that 'bigness is not necessarily greatness'. Still there is, throughout the lectures, an assumption that the future of the world is with the big States, and that if England desires to take rank alongside Russia and the United States and to take 'a higher rank than the States of the Continent', she must form a federal union with the Dominions oversea.[1]

Contemporary events suggested a similar conclusion. It is, perhaps, rash to anticipate the judgement of posterity, but it can hardly be doubted that the historian who, a century hence, reviews the events of the nineteenth century will indicate as its most characteristic feature the triumph of the nationality principle, and will point to the unification of Italy and the unification of Germany as the most illustrious exemplification of that principle. It is true that the force of *nationality* is not uniform in operation; that its effects have sometimes been centrifugal, sometimes centripetal. If, on the one hand, it is responsible for the making of modern Germany and modern Italy, equally, on the other, it must accept responsibility for the separation of Belgium from Holland, of Norway from Sweden; for the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, and for the separatist movement in Ireland. None the less it was natural that the generation to which Seeley belonged should have been impressed much more by the constructive than by the destructive influence of the idea of nationality; that it should have deemed the unification of Italy more important than the independence of Greece, and the consolidation of

[1] Cf. e.g. Lecture I, p. 16.

Germany as outweighing the resurrection of Serbia or Bulgaria. Lord Bryce, when introducing, in 1905, a volume on the Balkan problem, appeared to lament the predominant tendency of the nineteenth century. 'The most conspicuous feature', he wrote, 'in the evolution of the modern world has been the effacement of the smaller and the growth of the larger nations and nationalities. . . . Local patriotism, with all that diversity and play of individuality which local patriotism has evolved, withers silently away';[1] and yet, twenty years before, there was no more enthusiastic champion of the big-State movement than Professor Bryce. Writing of the war of 1870–71, he said:

'The unbroken career of victory which carried the German arms over the east and centre of France, and placed them at last triumphant in the capital of their foes, proved in the truest sense what strength there is in a righteous cause. . . . It is the tradition of a glorious unity, in the days when Germany led the world, that has made Germany again the central power of continental Europe and the arbiter of its destinies.'

And again, in reference to the parallel movements in Italy and Germany, he wrote:

'The triumph of the principle of nationality is complete; the old wrongs are redressed; the old problems solved: we seem to have closed one great page in the world's history, and pause to wonder and conjecture what the next may have to unfold. . . . Through western and central Europe the small States have disappeared and the great States have reached their natural boundaries of race and languages.'[2]

In 1880 Professor Bryce was, no less than Professor Seeley, an adherent of the doctrine of *les limites naturelles*, even though the unification of the big States was purchased at the price of the elimination of the smaller. And both Professors were typical of the prevailing temper of the time. The doctrine of nationality was invoked not so much in defence of the small State as to justify the expansion of the larger aggregates.

Recently, however, there has been an unmistakable reaction. And, just as the unification of Germany was to the publicists of the last generation the pre-eminent illustration of the working of the principle of nationality in its centripetal and integrating

[1] Villari (ed.), *The Balkan Problem*, pp. 12, 13.
[2] *The Holy Roman Empire* (seventh edition, 1880), pp. 433, 442–4.

aspect, so now the political and intellectual revolt against Germany and German ideals has provided a text for the justification of the small State. The real significance of German political philosophy, the true meaning of German political evolution, have been revealed, as it were in a flash-light, by the eruption of the present War. The consequence is that we are witnessing something like a stampede of the intellectuals, a stampede which is perhaps somewhat lacking alike in dignity, in sense of humour, and above all in sense of proportion. Primarily, of course, it is due to the *reductio ad absurdum* of political theories and philosophies which, when presented in moderation and not pushed to extremes, commanded, and justly commanded, a large measure of respect and assent. The unification of great States on the basis of nationality is a case in point. All the mid-Victorian liberals rejoiced in the unification of Italy, even though it involved the absorption of Genoa and Venice; most liberals regarded with satisfaction, and many, like Professor Bryce, welcomed with enthusiasm, the consolidation of Germany under the hegemony of Prussia.

Since the 'seventies the wheel of fortune has revolved with unusual rapidity. Modern Germany, not content with the achievement of national unity and the realization of national identity, aspires to domination; seeks to revive the empire not of Otto but of Charlemagne. The liberties of Europe are once more threatened as in the days of Philip II, of Louis XIV, and of Napoleon Bonaparte. The shock administered to the intellectuals is severe. They turn and rend the prophets of the last generation. Where now are the doctrines of Carlyle? Interpreted by the light afforded by Bismarck and the Kaiser William II, the 'rectifications' of frontier effected by Frederick II begin to wear a more sinister aspect. Even Carlyle, with all a valetudinarian's admiration for physical prowess, failed to justify the partition of Poland, but what are we to say of the annexation of the Silesian Duchies? Must the history of the eighteenth century, no less than that of the nineteenth, be re-written?

Before we commit ourselves to a *volte-face* so complete,

before we execute a movement so humiliating and painful, it seems desirable to sketch, with extreme brevity, the evolution of the States-system of modern Europe.

It was not until the sixteenth century that the modern States-system began to take shape. During the Middle Ages, as Bishop Stubbs was wont to insist, there was no *international* system in Europe; there were, in fact, with insignificant exceptions, no nations. England had indeed, as we have seen, attained to a precocious and perhaps a premature sense of national unity in the thirteenth century; Hungary also was a conscious entity, but for the rest Europe was made up of 'great bundles of states'. 'France, Germany, and Spain were busily striving either for consolidation or against dissolution.' Most of the greater Powers 'were prevented by the interposition of small semi-neutral territories from any extensive or critical collision . . . the kingdoms of France and Germany were kept at arm's length from each other, and, being at arm's length, in an attitude something like friendship'.[1]

This state of things lasted roughly down to the end of the fifteenth century. The consolidation of France under Louis XI; the aggregation of the Spanish kingdoms under Charles V; the destruction of the feudal system and the absorption of feudal principalities; the development of centralized administrations; the emergence of powerful monarchies; the virtual dissolution of the medieval empire; the partial repudiation of the authority of the Papacy—all these things, more or less coincident, combined to revolutionize the medieval polity. Out of the chaos produced by the dissolution of the older unifying forces the new States-system, as we have shown in a previous chapter, emerged.

What was the attitude of the oldest of the Nation-States towards the new order of things? English diplomacy has never been highly regarded upon the Continent for the virtue of consistency. Nevertheless, as will be shown by a specific and detailed illustration in the next chapter, English foreign policy has exhibited, on broad lines, a remarkable adherence

[1] Cf. Preface to the *Chronicle of Roger of Hoveden*, pp. 186–7.

to certain fixed principles. Among these the doctrine of the European equilibrium has always held a foremost place. Whether or no the authorship of the '*Great Design*' *of Henri IV* may, as some hold be imputed to Queen Elizabeth, certain it is that she consistently acted upon the principle which that essay was designed to illustrate. The whole of her policy was based upon the idea of a 'balance of power'. And herein she followed in the path trodden by the wisest of her immediate predecessors.

Of English foreign policy, in the modern sense, the first real exponent was Henry VII. He was the first English statesman who found himself confronted by the new problem, who perceived the implications of the new States-system. And he comported himself and guided the counsels of his country, under new and difficult conditions, with eminent success. Bacon described him as 'a wonder for wise men', and added: 'Certain it is, that though his reputation was great at home, yet it was greater abroad. For foreigners that could not see the passages of affairs, but made their judgements upon the issues of them, noted that he was ever in strife and ever aloft.' The more discerning of later critics concur in this judgement as to Henry's abilities and success. 'A cold, steady, strongly purposed man, patient, secret, circumspect'; he 'found England weak and poor, and divided against herself and isolated in Europe', he left her 'having a place in the councils of Europe second to none, courted on every side and able to make her weight felt perceptibly in the balance'. Such is the judgement of Bishop Stubbs.[1] The most elaborate study of the policy of the reign comes from the pen of a great German scholar, Dr. Wilhelm Busch, and his summary is as follows: 'Assured peace, an honoured position among the Powers, English trade pushed to the front in the general competition . . . all this would have been impossible without the prudent, clear-sighted, judicious, and far-seeing policy of Henry VII.'[2] The key-note of that policy was the maintenance of the continental equilibrium. Exhausted by the Hundred Years' War

[1] *Lectures on Medieval and Modern History*, p. 370.
[2] *England under the Tudors*, p. 240.

with France and discouraged by its issue; distraught by dynastic rivalries at home and plunged into social anarchy by lack of 'governance'; relatively poor in resources and population; possessing neither fleet nor army, England, despite her precocious realization of national unity, might well have counted for naught in the new Europe which came into being in the later fifteenth century. The prudent and vigilant diplomacy of the first of the Tudors secured for his country a great position, and established a tradition of incalculable service to his successors. Wolsey walked with cautious steps in the path defined by Henry VII. Henry VIII temporarily strayed from it to his undoing. The marriage of his elder daughter threatened to reduce England to the position of a mere appanage in the mighty empire of the Habsburgs; the virginity and incomparable prudence of the younger rescued the country from the entangling toils of continental alliances, and re-established England's position as the sustainer of the European equilibrium and the arbiter in European diplomacy. How great had been the danger alike to England and to Europe if Queen Mary had not been childless, or if Queen Elizabeth had yielded to the solicitations or succumbed to the attacks of Philip of Spain, may be learnt from the pages of Seeley's illuminating essay on British foreign policy.[1] It must, for our present purpose, suffice to note that Queen Elizabeth confronted a most dangerous conjunction of circumstances external and internal, and overcame it by circumspect adherence to the policy inherited from the grandfather she so closely resembled. By the end of the sixteenth century that policy was, as the next chapter will demonstrate, rapidly hardening into a tradition. The theory of the equilibrium involved friendly relations with and occasional succour to the smaller Powers and in particular, during this period, to the northern provinces of the Netherlands. The defeat of Philip's Armada secured the independence of the United Provinces. During the next half-century, however—under the early Stuarts and Cromwell—the development of commercial rivalries, notably in the Far East,

[1] *Growth of British Policy.*

interposed a serious barrier to the friendship of the two countries.

The foreign policy of the Protector was, indeed, rather equivocal. In assisting Mazarin to overthrow the power of Spain he seemed to show himself indifferent to the principle of the equilibrium. On the other hand, the conclusion of treaties, though primarily commercial in significance, with Sweden, Denmark, and Portugal, indicated a desire for friendship with the smaller nations.

The alliance with Portugal has been maintained, virtually without interruption, from that day to this. Cemented by the marriage of Charles II with Catherine of Braganza, it was confirmed by the famous 'Methuen' Treaty of 1703. In the War of the Spanish Succession, still more in the campaigns against Napoleon, the friendship of Portugal was of inestimable value to a maritime State. The debt incurred by England was more than repaid to Portugal by Canning and Palmerston, but by their day the ancient alliance between the two countries was too firmly established to be permanently affected either by party oscillations in England or by dynastic and constitutional vicissitudes in Portugal.

It was otherwise in regard to the Scandinavian States. The close connexion between Sweden and France, steadily maintained for two centuries, precluded, at least during the eighteenth century, any genuine cordiality between Stockholm and the Court of St. James's. Denmark too was, during the same period, rather persistently unfriendly to England. Our maritime code bore hardly upon her as upon others, and she showed her not unnatural resentment in the Armed Neutrality and the Northern League. The truth is that from 1688 to 1815 the absorption of England in the world-struggle against France left her little leisure for the improvement of her relations with the smaller nations. This preoccupation may in part account for the acquiescence of Great Britain in the 'most cynical crime in modern history'—the partition of Poland. 'No wise or honest man', wrote Burke, 'can approve of that partition, or can contemplate it without prognosticating great mischief from it to all countries at some future time.' Burke

indubitably spoke the mind of the better part of his contempories, but Lord North was too busy in America, Pitt was too much absorbed in the war against the Revolution, to pay much heed to the affairs of Poland. Hence it came that it was not until after the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars that England was again in a position to espouse with effect the cause of the smaller nationalities.

It was the perversion of the principles of the Holy Alliance which reawakened the conscience of England in this matter. The originator of that Alliance—the Tsar Alexander—was a curious mixture of cloudy mysticism and calculating shrewdness. But his Great Design was at least as void of all self-seeking motives as that of Henri IV. The Tsar and his scheme were, however, captured by Metternich, and it was not long before the machinery of the Alliance was assiduously employed for the suppression of all liberal movements in the individual States. To the Alliance itself England was never formally a party, and against the perversion of its principles Lord Castlereagh stoutly protested. Death—self-inflicted—robbed him of much of the credit which undeniably belonged to him, and Canning reaped where Castlereagh had sown. Greece, Portugal, and the South American Colonies of Spain—now recognized as independent States—all had cause to bless the name of England and Canning. The powerful autocrats of Central and Eastern Europe stood for the principle of interference in the interests of absolutism ; England stood for the individual liberties of the smaller States. Castlereagh and Canning founded the recent tradition of English policy. Palmerston accepted and enforced it with a vigour certainly not inferior to theirs. The independence of Belgium, assured by the Treaty of London (1839), was a conspicuous triumph for his diplomacy. In regard both to Greece and Portugal Lord Palmerston maintained and completed the work of Canning. England was largely instrumental in obtaining for Denmark a guarantee of integrity (1852), but unfortunately, when the crisis arrived, in 1863, Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell were more suspicious of Napoleon than of Bismarck, and Prussia was permitted to annex the Danish Duchies without any effective protest from Great Britain.

With the exemplary manifestation of nationality principles in Italy England found herself in complete sympathy. But here the principle operated as an integrating force. In the Balkans, on the contrary, its tendency was disruptive. In this latter case England found herself in a dilemma. The abstract principles of liberty and nationality commanded her enthusiastic assent. But a deepening mistrust of the supposed ambitions of Russia rendered the application of those principles rather inconvenient and inopportune. To Russia, therefore, rather than to England the re-emerging nationalities of the Balkans—Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro—looked for sympathy and support against the Ottomans. The Slav nations were conscious that their efforts to throw off the Turkish yoke were watched with eager and enthusiastic sympathy by powerful sections of the English public; but the Foreign Office was committed to the doctrine of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, and down to 1880 the sympathy extended by Englishmen to the Balkan nationalities was unofficial.

After 1880 there was a rapid change if not in public sentiment, at least in the official attitude, and when it was realized that the new nations in the Near East could assert and maintain their independence not only of Constantinople but also of Petersburg and Vienna all hesitation was banished even from more cautious minds. Thenceforward all sections of opinion in England concurred in the belief that the time had come for Europe to rid itself from the nightmare and incubus of the Turk; for the restoration of the soil of the Balkan peninsula to the peoples who through long centuries of oppression and misgovernment had retained the memory of national independence and cherished the hope of reasserting it.

There is, however, a question, searching and fundamental, which at this point we are compelled to face: Is the multiplication of small States, in itself, desirable? Is it likely to serve the cause of humanity? Will it conduce to the progress of civilization and promote the peace of the world?

The controversy between the large and the small State is one of long standing. Even to-day much of the argument

in favour of the latter is coloured by the memory of the incomparable though transitory brilliance of the City-States of ancient Hellas. Over scholarly minds Aristotle still exercises—and fortunately exercises—an undisputed sway. But with the origins we are not immediately concerned. The case for the small State has lately been re-stated with conspicuous and characteristic skill by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher.[1]

'Almost everything which is most precious in our civilization', writes Mr. Fisher, 'has come from small States, the Old Testament, the Homeric poems, the Attic and the Elizabethan drama, the art of the Italian Renaissance, the common law of England. Nobody needs to be told what humanity owes to Athens, Florence, Geneva, or Weimar. The world's debt to any one of these small States far exceeds all that has issued from the militant monarchies of Louis XIV, of Napoleon, of the present Emperor of Germany.' The claim is a large one, and the argument appears to assume that the big monarchical State must necessarily be 'militant'—a point to which I shall recur—but the debt is undeniable and nobody desires to repudiate it. Nor will any one who is acquainted with the history of the City-State deny that the essential limitation of size possessed conspicuous advantages. Undoubtedly, it raised the average of the individual citizen; it multiplied the opportunities for the development of individual genius in politics, in art, and in literature; by the identification of local and central government it intensified the sense of patriotism.[2] The City-State, as Mr. Fisher truly affirms, 'served as a school of patriotic virtue, not in the main of the blustering and thrasonical type, but refined and sublimated by every grace of instinct and reason. It further enabled the experiment of a free, direct, democratic government to be made with incalculable consequence for the political thinking of the world. Finally, it threw into a forced and fruitful communion minds of the most different temper, giving to them an elasticity and many-sidedness which might other-

[1] *The Value of Small States*, by H. A. L. Fisher, one of an admirable series of pamphlets published by the Oxford University Press.

[2] Cf. Freeman, *Federal Government*, pp. 29 *seq.*

wise have been wanting or less conspicuous, and stimulating, through the close mutual competition which it engendered, an intensity of intellectual and artistic passion which has been the wonder of all succeeding generations.' It should, perhaps, have been pointed out that the fruitful experiment of direct democracy was rendered possible, not merely by the contracted area of the city, but by the existence of a large body of slaves whose manual labour provided the 'citizens' with the leisure essential for the pursuit of the higher life, political and intellectual. But to pass on. Most people will agree that it is eminently desirable to avoid drab uniformity and to preserve variety of type. Small States may also be valuable, as Mr. Fisher ingeniously urges, as laboratories for social experiment. Similar advantages might perhaps be secured, even in big States, by the enlargement of the sphere of local government and the freer use of permissive legislation. One further point may be conceded to Mr. Fisher. 'There is no grace of soul, no disinterested endeavour of mind, no pitch of unobtrusive self-sacrifice, of which the members of small and pacific communities have not repeatedly shown themselves to be capable.' That is undeniably true, but is it true only of the citizens of the smaller States? Are these virtues denied to members of great nations or even to the subjects of militant monarchies?

The truth is that, despite the eloquence of his pen and the unquestionable force of many of his pleas, there underlies Mr. Fisher's argument a strong trace of the mid-Victorian Cobdenite, the assumption that the nationality principle operates with peculiar force in small communities, that the latter are necessarily pacific in temper and tendency, and that great States are 'organized for the vulgarity of aggressive war' (p. 11). With the din of the doctrines of Treitschke, Dr. Rohrbach, Professor Delbrück, and other publicists and historians of the Prussian school ringing in our ears, it is permissible, perhaps, to make this assumption. But, after all, the German Empire is not the only great State of the modern world. Neither the British Empire, monarchical and unitary in form, nor the federal republic of the United States

can be said to be 'organized for the vulgarity of aggressive war', and both are incomparably larger than Germany.

From Mr. Fisher, one of the most accomplished of living historians, we may turn to an historian, who, though lacking the brilliance of the younger writer, was eminently representative of the writers of the last generation, and was equally conspicuous for his robust faith in liberalism. In curious contrast to Mr. Fisher, Mr. Freeman insisted that the multiplication of small States not only multiplied the possibilities and increased the probability of war, but tended also 'to produce a greater degree of cruelty in warfare, and a greater severity in the recognized law of war'.[1] As regards internal politics the small State tended, in his opinion, to intensify party strife, and render it more bitter and more enduring. Moreover, the life of the City-State was proverbially insecure, and government was consequently unstable. Large States have their disadvantages: the substitution of representative government for direct democracy provides for the citizen an inferior political education; electors are apt to be at once ignorant, careless, and corrupt. Nevertheless the balance of advantage would appear to lie with the larger aggregates: they lessen local prejudice; they diminish the horrors of external war, and they increase the chances of peace over relatively extended areas.

Such, in brief, is Mr. Freeman's argument, and whatever may be thought of that argument as a whole, the last point —a point of pre-eminent importance—must surely be conceded. There can be no real assurance of peace, internal or external, save in the recognition of the rule of law. In maintaining this thesis it is unnecessary to subscribe to the purely legal conception of politics entertained by Hobbes. Still, Hobbes comes near the truth when he says: 'Where there is no common power, there is no law; and where no law, no justice.' Beyond the limits of territorial sovereignties there is at present, in the above sense, no law and, therefore, nothing to enforce the keeping of covenants. Internationally, we are once more plunged into the state of nature. To multiply petty sovereignties is, under prevailing conditions, to contract

[1] *Federal Government* (second edition), p. 53.

the operation of the rule of law, and to substitute for the obligation of contract the arbitrament of force. But, on the other hand, to ignore the claims of that most elusive but not least real of all political forces, the force of nationality, is simply to perpetuate unrest and to invite ultimate disaster.

Is it then possible to reconcile the claims of the smaller nationalities with the formation of the larger aggregates which can alone secure to an increasing number of the human race the supreme advantages of the rule of law? Mr. Asquith declared in a memorable utterance, at the beginning of the War, that 'we shall never sheathe the sword . . . until the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe are placed upon an unassailable foundation'. To that declaration the whole nation assented. But where is the foundation to be laid, and how is it to be rendered unassailable? Treaties solemnly concluded, the faith of great nations repeatedly pledged, could not avail to save Belgium from invasion and desolation at the hands of a ruthless and overbearing enemy who preferred 'necessity' to law. What is to prevent a repetition of the offence? Not, surely, the mere multiplication of small and independent sovereignties. But can we, without multiplying sovereignties, concede the claims and satisfy the aspirations of small nationalities?

Upon many minds, and not the least thoughtful, the conviction has, for some time past, been forcing itself that a reconciliation between the centripetal and the centrifugal forces which are so manifestly operating in the modern world can be effected only by an extension of the principle of federalism. But towards this consummation we can advance only by slow and cautious steps. The Tsar Alexander I, with his Great Design for a confederation of the European States, was much before his time; still more was Henri IV; Alexander's association with Metternich naturally exposed him to the suspicion of all liberal statesmen, and the suspicions were quickly justified by the rapid degeneration of the Holy Alliance. But apart from the perversion of the original conception the scheme itself was born out of due time.[1]

[1] Cf. *infra*, Chapter XV.

Where the Tsar Alexander had failed Mr. Cobden thought he might succeed. In the doctrines of the Manchester School there was more of idealism than has been generally supposed. Tennyson, pre-eminently the poet of Imperialism, was not proof against the seductions of those who

> . . . Dipt into the future far as human eye could see,
> Saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be,
> Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
> Pilots of the purple twilight dropping down with costly bales.
> . . . . . .
> Till the war drum throbbed no longer and the battle flags were furled
> In the parliament of man and the federation of the world.

The 'federation of the world' is still far distant. Even the federation of Europe is not yet. Nevertheless there can be no security for the independence of small States save in the acceptance and extension of the federal principle. Without federalism would Germany be fighting as one man to-day? If Lincoln had not preserved the federal union of the United States, would internal peace prevail to-day throughout that vast area? If Sir John Macdonald and Lord Carnarvon had not applied the principle to the several provinces of Canada, would there be the same unanimity of sentiment in the great Dominion? If the time is not ripe for the federation of Europe, still less for the federation of the world, it is ripe for the formation of larger aggregates of States in which the smaller nations will find an honoured, a secure, and a sufficiently independent place; the time is overdue for the consolidation of the British Dominions into an organic and coherent federation. Such a federation might well be the precursor of others; in Scandinavia, it may be; perhaps in the Balkans; perhaps in the vast-stretching dominions but lately subject to the Tsar. Only, it would seem, by the bold application of this principle can we at the same time secure the independence of the smaller nations and promote the cause of international peace.

CHAPTER VIII

ENGLAND AND THE LOW COUNTRIES

'There hath beene, time out of mind, even by the naturall situation of those Lowe Countries and our realme of Englande, one directly opposite to the other, and by reason of the ready crossing of the seas, and multitude of large and commodious havens respectively on both sides, a continuall traffique and commerce betwixt the people of Englande, and the naturall people of these Lowe Countries. . . . There hath beene in former ages many speciall alliances and confederations not onely betwixt the Kings of England and the lordes of the said coontries but also betwixt the very naturall subjectes of both Countries. . . . By which mutual bondes, there hath continued perpetual unions of the peoples heartes together and so by way of continual intercourses from age to age the same mutuall love hath bene inviolablie kept and exercised.'—QUEEN ELIZABETH TO HER PEOPLE, 1585. (*Somers' Tracts*, i. 411.)

WHAT Aristotle said of Revolution is true also of War. 'It is not the causes of revolutions which are unimportant, but only the occasions.' The 'occasions' of wars have, generally speaking, been quite unimportant. It was the amputation of Captain Jenkins's ears that opened a world conflict between Great Britain and the Bourbons; it was the flinging overboard of some tea-chests into the waters of Massachusetts Bay that occasioned the final breach between England and her American colonists; it was Bismarck's revision and publication of the Ems telegram that evoked a declaration of war from Paris in 1870. In these and other cases the immediate occasion was trifling; the essential causes of the wars that followed were, on the contrary, of profound and far-reaching significance.

Does the great war of 1914 form an exception to the rule? As regards the participation of Great Britain, the occasion was hardly less significant than the deep, long-operating, and fundamental cause. The latter must, of course, be traced to the fixed determination of Germany to challenge the world-

empire of Great Britain. That subject has, however, been discussed in a previous chapter, and it need not detain us. Nor can there be any dispute as to the immediate occasion of the War. That is to be found in the cynical disregard displayed by Germany for solemn treaty obligations, and her shameless violation of the neutrality of Belgium.

Whether Great Britain would now be at war if Germany had respected Belgian neutrality is a question which fortunately we are not called upon to consider. It should, however, be noted that the 'strong bid' for British neutrality made by the German Chancellor on July 29 referred primarily not to Belgium but to France.[1] Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg had the effrontery to suggest that Great Britain should stand by and see France defeated, humiliated, and stripped, at any rate of her colonial possessions, by Germany. It need not be said that by assenting to such a suggestion this country would have incurred indelible infamy. Mr. Asquith, speaking as Prime Minister, justly denounced the Chancellor's proposal as 'infamous', and Sir Edward Grey's dispatch is on record to prove that it was, without a moment's hesitation, repudiated.[2] That we should have acted otherwise—that we should have accepted the naval assistance of France in the Mediterranean and then have left her northern coasts at the mercy of the German marine—is happily unthinkable.

Nevertheless, it is certain that the actual and proximate occasion of the War between Great Britain and Germany was the unprovoked attack of Germany upon Belgium. To the scientific student of politics the occasion was not less significant than the cause.

The modern kingdom of Belgium occupies, like the Swiss Confederation, a peculiar position in the European economy. That position rests in a formal sense upon a series of international agreements. Article VII of the Treaties of London (November 15, 1831, and April 19, 1839) runs as follows: 'Belgium . . . shall form an independent and neutral State. It shall be bound to observe such neutrality towards all other

[1] *Correspondence respecting the European Crisis*, No. 85.
[2] *Correspondence*, No. 101, Sir E. Grey to Sir E. Goschen, July 30.

States.'[1] Great Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia were the assenting parties to the Treaties of London, and by those Powers the independence and neutrality of Belgium was solemnly and specifically guaranteed.

But the matter does not rest there. France, Prussia, and Great Britain entered, as we have seen, into further engagements on the subject during the Franco-German War in August 1870.[2]

In 1870 it suited Prussia's game that the neutrality of Belgium should be respected by both combatants. But for some time past it has been tolerably clear that the conditions of the game had altered. It was natural, therefore, when the dogs of war seemed likely to be loosed in 1911, that Belgium should seek in Berlin renewed assurances as to her international position. In reply the German Chancellor declared 'that Germany had no intention of violating Belgian neutrality'. On April 29, 1913, Herr von Jagow replied to an interpellation in the Reichstag: 'Belgian neutrality is provided for by International Conventions, and Germany is determined to respect those Conventions.'

On July 31, 1914, the German Minister at Brussels expressed his conviction 'that the sentiments expressed at that time had not changed'.[3] If Herr von Below was well informed the change of sentiment at Berlin must have been extraordinarily rapid. On August 2 German troops entered Luxemburg, and on the same day the German Government announced at Brussels its intention of sending troops into Belgium. Belgium promptly (August 3) retorted that she would be faithful to her international obligations, and would repel, by force if need be, every attack upon her rights.[4] On the following day (August 4) England formally required Belgium to 'resist with all the means at her disposal' any attempt to force her 'to abandon her attitude of neutrality', and promised to join Russia and France in affording her assistance.[5]

[1] Cf. Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, pp. 863, 985.
[2] *Supra*, chapter iii, and Hertslet, *op. cit.*, pp. 1887, 1890.
[3] See *Diplomatic Correspondence respecting the War published by the Belgian Government*, No. 12, 1914, pp. 11, 12.
[4] *Op. cit.*, pp. 18, 19, 21. [5] *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

The result of these negotiations is now matter of history. To tell the story of Belgium's heroic resistance, to appraise its military value to the strategy of the allies, and still more its moral significance for the world at large, will hereafter demand the pen of a Thucydides. Happily, we are concerned with only one aspect of the story.

The insolent demand of Germany and the valiant resistance of Belgium furnished assets, moral and military, which were of incalculable value to the British Cabinet. Here was the one issue which could be counted on to close the ranks in England; the one issue which could be made intelligible to all classes in the electorate. In the event, the decision of the Cabinet was endorsed with a unanimity which none would have dared to anticipate. That unanimity was evoked by something more than admiration for the pluck of a small nation; by more than resentment at the wanton attack of an overbearing bully; by more than regard for treaty obligations and international good faith. Consciously or, more probably, unconsciously, the nation was obedient to an instinct which at several great crises has inspired the action and the policy of England. That instinct has established a political tradition, and on that tradition is founded one of the soundest and most persistent maxims of English statecraft: that under no circumstances may the Low Countries be absorbed by, or pass under the exclusive influence of, their powerful neighbours either on the east or on the west. Thus, for many centuries, the Netherlands have formed the pivot of England's continental policy.

The land which has now won for itself imperishable fame under the name of Belgium has undergone many vicissitudes both of designation and of political allegiance. As such the Kingdom of Belgium has subsisted only since 1831. United with the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1814, it had for the twenty years previous to that date formed an integral part of France. During the eighteenth century (1714–94) it had been one of the many Provinces in the miscellaneous Empire of the Austrian Habsburgs. From the days of Philip II down

to the Peace of Utrecht (1714) it had adhered to Spain and had been known as the Spanish Netherlands. In the fifteenth century it had formed part of the great inheritance of the Valois Dukes of Burgundy, and from them had passed, through the marriage of Charles the Bold's heiress, Mary, to the acquisitive Habsburgs. Earlier still, there had been on the low lands, at the delta of the Rhine and the Scheldt, and the Meuse, a bundle of Duchies and Counties and Bishoprics, rendering a somewhat uncertain allegiance to the Emperor or the King of France. But no shifting of political allegiance and no change of nomenclature has ever sufficed to break the traditional connexion between the Low Countries and England. Flanders, Burgundy, the Spanish Netherlands, the Austrian Netherlands, or Belgium—no matter the name—the land has always possessed for us the same interest and significance.

Of this persistent connexion a few salient illustrations must suffice. As early as the ninth century there was some rudimentary trade between Flanders and the Kingdom of Wessex. Nor was the connexion wholly economic. King Alfred's daughter Elfrith wedded Baldwin II, Count of Flanders. Thenceforward the alliance between Wessex and Flanders was continuous. In the middle of the eleventh century the great problem for England was whether she was to remain in barbaric and insular independence under a native dynasty or to form part of the empire of the Normans. Godwin, the great West-Saxon Earl, and William the Norman alike realized the importance of securing, in the impending struggle, the friendly neutrality, if not the active assistance, of Flanders. Earl Godwin found in Judith, a daughter of the reigning Baldwin, a wife for his son Tostig; William the Bastard married another daughter, the Countess Matilda. The Norman made the better thing of it, for numbers of Flemings fought under his banner at Senlac, and, after the Conquest, established themselves permanently in England.

Thus far the connexion between the two countries had been dynastic, political, strategical. A new and even stronger tie was now to be forged. From the thirteenth century to the sixteenth 'wool was king', and during that period wool

formed the chief economic bond between England and Flanders. Gradually the fact became recognized in England, particularly among the monks of the Cistercian order, that in the fleeces of English sheep we possessed an asset of the highest value both in a commercial and in a political computation. On two occasions, first in 1274 and secondly in 1297, Edward I compelled compliance with his demands upon Flanders by prohibiting the export of English wool. From the thirteenth century onwards continuous intercourse was maintained between England and the Flemish cities, such as Bruges, Antwerp, Ypres, and Ghent, now rapidly attaining to the industrial pre-eminence they so long enjoyed. In the twelfth century the Flemish merchants had already got a special street of booths in the famous fair of Winchester. A charter granted to Bruges in 1240 makes mention of the 'Hansa of London'—a league which at one time included as many as seventeen towns. All the Flemish towns of any importance were members of the league, and, at one time, Châlons, Rheims, St. Quentin, Courtrai, Amiens, and Beauvais were included in it as well.[1] Of all the cities, however, Bruges and Ghent were the two which maintained the closest and most continuous relations with England. In the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries this connexion was subjected to a severe political strain. The consolidation of the French kingdom under the Capetian dynasty, and its expansion towards the Rhine, seriously threatened the independence of Flanders. The Counts were indeed drawn, almost irresistibly, into the political orbit of France. But in Flanders the cities counted for at least as much as the Princes, and while the Princes looked to Paris the cities looked to London. Thus the great victory at Courtrai (1302), won by the citizens against the chivalry of France, was hardly less a triumph for the English connexion than for the democratic party in the Flemish towns.

But French ambition, though repulsed, was not finally repelled. In 1328 Philip VI avenged the humiliation of Courtrai by a great victory at Cassel. The immediate sequel

[1] Ashley, *Economic History*, i. 109.

of this victory was an order to the Count of Flanders to arrest all the English merchants in his dominions. To this challenge Edward III, following the precedent set by his grandfather, retorted by placing a strict embargo upon the export of wool to the Flemish towns. Great was the consternation in Ypres, Ghent, and Bruges, and the Flemish merchants soon made it clear that, if their Count was willing to take orders from Paris, the cities were not. Thus the high-handed action of Philip VI proved to be the prelude to a drama upon which the curtain did not fall until the middle of the fifteenth century.

The causes of the Hundred Years' War have formed the theme of innumerable academic disputations, and it is no part of my purpose to add to the number. Many things combined in the earlier years of the fourteenth century to embitter the relations between the Kings of England and France. On the one side, there was the natural anxiety of the French Crown to absorb the English possessions in Gascony and Guienne; on the other, an equal anxiety to be rid of the embarrassing alliance between Scotland and France. But the *causa causans* of the war was the determination of the English King and of the Flemish towns to keep a door open for the entrance of English wool into Flanders. That object was vital to both countries. From the time of Edward I onwards the English Crown was increasingly dependent upon the export duty on raw wool. That duty was at one time 100 per cent. *ad valorem*, and it is satisfactory to know that in this case the whole of the tax fell upon the foreigner. Had England not possessed a virtual monopoly of the commodity such a result would, of course, have been impossible. But in the case of a monopoly bold financial methods rarely lack justification. If the export duties formed an important item in the Plantagenet budgets, the wool itself was essential to the industrial prosperity of the Flemish cities. Against such strong bonds of mutual self-interest the diplomatic connexion of the French kings and the Flemish counts availed little.[1]

[1] It is worthy of note that when, in 1340, Edward III assumed the title and quartered the arms of King of France, the step was taken to satisfy the scruples of his Flemish allies.

In the fifteenth century there was change in many of the conditions of the struggle. But one feature remained constant —the alliance between England and the Low Countries, now united under the Valois Dukes of Burgundy. And the interesting fact is that the alliance persisted not merely apart from dynastic and party connexions but despite them. The great position attained by Henry V in France rested fundamentally upon the Burgundian alliance. 'This is the hole through which the English entered France.' So said a Carthusian monk when exhibiting the skull of John, Duke of Burgundy, to Francis I; and he spoke truly. The marriage of John, Duke of Bedford, to Anne, sister of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, cemented the alliance during Henry VI's minority. Momentarily broken by the Treaty of Arras (1435), it was renewed under the Yorkists when Edward IV married his sister Margaret to Charles the Bold, and it was at the court of his brother-in-law that Edward took refuge when in 1470 he was compelled to flee from England. To the Yorkists, indeed, the alliance was as important commercially as it had been strategically and politically to the Lancastrians.

The maintenance of the Burgundian alliance was one of the causes of the rupture between Edward IV and his 'over-mighty subject', Warwick the King-maker. For political reasons the latter favoured an alliance with Louis XI of France. The King, with shrewd insight, put economics before politics, and delighted the London merchants by professing friendship with the Low Countries.

Towards the close of the fifteenth century there was a change of dynasty in both countries. In 1477 Maximilian, the eldest son of the Emperor Frederick III, married Mary, the daughter and heiress of Charles the Bold of Burgundy. As a result of that characteristically lucky marriage the Netherlands passed, in 1482, to the Habsburgs. Three years later the battle of Bosworth placed the crown of England on the head of Henry Tudor.

The accession of Henry Tudor momentarily threatened the connexion between the two countries. The Yorkist plots which embarrassed the earlier years of Henry VII's reign were

hatched at the Court of the Duchess Margaret. But community of economic instincts once more proved too strong for dynastic antipathies, and the *Intercursus Magnus* of 1496 marked the renewal of commercial friendship.

With the opening of the sixteenth century the modern European problem, of which the Netherlands have formed the pivot, comes still more clearly into view. Hitherto the European States-system had existed only in embryo; but with the absorption of feudal principalities into strong and centralized national monarchies (as in France); with the agglomeration of kingdoms (as in Spain); and the development of the royal power, Europe was confronted by a new danger.

Four times in the course of four centuries has the equilibrium of Europe, and the national independence of the several States, been menaced by the domination of a single Power: in the sixteenth century by the Habsburgs; in the late seventeenth by the Bourbon monarchy of France; a century later by Napoleon Bonaparte, and in the twentieth by the Hohenzollern. The issue of the latest attempt we may not yet predict. In each of the three earlier crises the European equilibrium was preserved by the efforts of England; in each, England's intervention was stimulated by an attack upon the Low Countries; in each her military operations were mainly concentrated upon Flanders.

Few words are needed to demonstrate the truth of this generalization.

The crisis of the sixteenth century was produced by the astonishingly rapid rise to pre-eminence of the Habsburgs. Proverbially fortunate in their marriages, they never used their favourite method with better effect than in this period. Grandson of Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy, grandson of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castille, the Emperor Charles V attained a position which was indeed imposing. Yet he made less of it than might have been anticipated. To Germany indeed his rule was disastrous. But his heart was never in Germany. Something of an Austrian, more of

a Spaniard, Charles V was primarily and predominantly a Burgundian. Flanders was the real pivot of his policy. Still more menacing than the position of Charles V, despite the partition of the Habsburg inheritance, was that of his son Philip II. To the Crown of Spain, the Lordship of the Low Countries, the Duchy of Milan, the Kingdom of the Sicilies, and the empire of Spanish South America, Philip in 1580 added the Crown of Portugal and with it acquired the great empire of Portugal in the far East and the far West. His marriage with Mary Tudor had threatened, as we saw in the last chapter, to bring England also into the net of the Habsburg system. Mary's childlessness averted the danger for the moment; Elizabeth's prudent procrastinations still further postponed it; the revolt of the Netherlands sensibly relieved the pressure, and the danger was finally dissipated by the defeat of the Armada. In the prolonged contest between Philip II and the Netherlands the defeat of the Armada was indeed only an incident, but it was far from being an insignificant one. Don John of Austria, Philip's brilliant bastard brother, clearly perceived the interdependence of the two questions. 'The true remedy for the evil condition of the Netherlands,' he wrote (May 27, 1576), 'in the judgement of all men, is that England should be in the power of a person devoted and well-affectioned to your Majesty's service; and it is the general opinion that the ruin of these countries and the impossibility of preserving them to your Majesty's Crown will result from the contrary position of English affairs.'

Nor was perception of this truth confined to foreigners. The interests of England plainly demanded that neither France nor Spain should gain possession of the Netherlands. 'Better far', wrote Walsingham to Cecil (January 1585), 'if the Queen would herself take the protection of those countries, with a resolution, if necessary, to spend half a million of money there. The burden would be willingly borne by the realm rather than they should come to the hands of the French or Spaniards.'[1] In this opinion Cecil cordially concurred, and had already expressed it in terms not less unequivocal: 'The

[1] Froude, xi. 550.

day when France became possessed of Holland and Zealand would be the last of England's independence.' But the more immediate menace came, of course, from Philip of Spain. 'As King of Spain without the Low Countries', wrote Cecil, 'he may trouble our skirts of Ireland, but never come to grasp with you, but if he once reduce the Low Countries to an absolute subjection I know not what limits any man of judgement can set unto his greatness.'[1]

In their concern for the independence of the Netherlands Cecil and Walsingham did but adhere to a national tradition of foreign policy. But the circumstances of the day supplied additional reasons for that adherence. In the Low Countries England found the weapon with which to withstand the threatened domination of Philip of Spain.

Yet Elizabeth had little liking for the indispensable instrument of her policy. The Dutch were not only rebels but Calvinists, and as such were doubly abhorrent in the Queen's eyes. But Elizabeth never allowed her personal prejudices to blind her eyes to the interests of her country. Help, therefore, was sent from England to the Netherlands, at first surreptitiously, and only in sufficient quantity to keep the insurrection alive without enabling it to achieve complete success. The seizure of the treasure destined for Alva (1568) was an enterprise altogether to Elizabeth's liking, and as the struggle became sterner more help was forthcoming. The proffered sovereignty of Holland and Zealand was prudently declined in 1575, but the murder of William of Orange in 1584 marked a serious crisis in the affairs of the Netherlands; and, consequently, in 1585 Elizabeth concluded a definite alliance and sent her favourite Leicester to their assistance. Leicester's intervention availed little, but three years later the cause of the Netherlands was saved by the defeat of the Armada.

Drake's victory did more than keep alive the flickering flame of Dutch independence; it did more than assure the safety of England; it restored the threatened equilibrium of western Europe. Ten years later Philip II died, a defeated

[1] Froude, xi. 163; *Somers' Tracts*, i. 170, quoted in Professor Firth's Presidential Address, *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, third series, vol. ix.

and disillusioned man. The menace of a Spanish domination was at an end. The might of Philip II had shattered itself against the stubborn resistance of the Netherlands, encouraged and sustained by Queen Elizabeth, and finally assured of success by Drake's brilliant victory off Gravelines.

After Philip II, Louis XIV. By the middle of the seventeenth century France was rapidly superseding Spain as the pre-eminent foe to the 'liberties of Europe'. The old French monarchy—built up by the patient labours of a succession of great administrators—was now nearing its zenith under *le roi soleil*. Richelieu, by consistent pressure applied to nobles and Huguenots, had subdued the last opponents of absolutism and centralization. To the young sovereign Louis XIV he bequeathed, as Bismarck bequeathed to William II, a weapon of dangerous potency. Supreme in his own kingdom, Louis XIV determined to make France dominant in Europe. For this also the way had been prepared, though unintentionally, by Richelieu. In his eyes as in those of all Frenchmen the natural frontiers of France were defined by the Ocean, the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean, the Alps, and the Rhine. Richelieu went some way towards attaining that ideal. By the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) France acquired a firm grip upon the middle Rhine. The three Lorraine Bishoprics—Metz, Toul, and Verdun—first taken in 1552, were confirmed to her; she secured Breisach and the Austrian Alsace, though the great fortress of Strasburg was specifically reserved to the Empire; she acquired the right to garrison Philippsburg; other Rhine fortresses were to be demolished, and no works were to be allowed on the right bank between Bâle and Philippsburg. Secure on the line of the Vosges, in the Meuse Valley, and on the middle Rhine, France now held a position of enormous strength, alike for defence, and, unfortunately, also for offence. The Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659) was the complement of the Treaty of Westphalia. By the acquisition of Roussillon and Cerdagne the French frontier was scientifically advanced to the Pyrenees; Pinerolo was to guard her frontier towards

Savoy, and, on the north-east, a large part of Artois passed into French hands.

Mazarin would have liked even more. As long ago as 1646 he had written: 'L'acquisition des Pays-Bas espagnols fournirent à la ville de Paris un boulevard inexpugnable.' This great prize was denied to the Cardinal for the moment, but the marriage of Louis XIV to Marie Thérèse of Spain opened up possibilities which, despite his wife's renunciation, he steadily strove to convert into concrete realization.

Louis' first opportunity came with the death of his father-in-law, Philip IV of Spain, in 1665. For the last six years his diplomacy had been ceaselessly directed towards the attainment of two objects: the nullification of the Queen's renunciation, and the isolation, first of his intended victim Spain, and then of his potential rival the Emperor Leopold. In 1665, with shameless audacity, Louis XIV claimed, in virtue of a pretended 'right of devolution', the greater part of the Spanish Netherlands together with parts of the 'Free County' of Burgundy and the Duchy of Luxemburg. The military operations which followed were a triumphal progress. Turenne made himself master of the Spanish Netherlands in three months; Condé overran the Free County in three weeks.

But Nemesis lay in wait for the over-bold conqueror who threatened at once the 'liberties of Europe' and the integrity of Belgium. Down to this attack upon Belgium, England had looked on quite unmoved at the rapid advance of France. Neither the Treaty of Westphalia nor the Treaty of the Pyrenees had opened the eyes of England to the fact that Spain was hopelessly decadent, and that a new Power had arisen, and was already on the march towards that dangerous pre-eminence from which Spain had been hurled by the defeat of the Armada. Cromwell, indeed, had put six thousand of the best troops in Europe at the disposal of Mazarin, and had thus helped, shortsightedly, to upset the equilibrium. Lord Bolingbroke's judgement may have been jaundiced, but there is force in his criticism:

'Our Charles I was no great politician, and yet he seemed

to discern that the balance of power was turning in favour of France some years before the Treaties of Westphalia. . . . Cromwell either did not discern this turn of the balance of power long afterwards when it was much more visible; or, discerning it, he was induced by reasons of private interest to act against the general interest of Europe. Cromwell joined with France against Spain, and though he got Jamaica and Dunkirk, he drove the Spaniards into a necessity of making a peace with France that has disturbed the peace of the world almost four score years, and the consequences of which have well-nigh beggared in our times the nation he enslaved in his.'

Dunkirk, the sole fruit of Cromwell's continental enterprise, was resold to Louis XIV by Charles II in 1662, and England, under the restored dynasty, entered upon the most shameful period of her foreign policy. But not even Charles II's venal and cynical contempt for national ideals and national interests could induce the nation to look on unconcernedly while Louis XIV was making himself master of the Spanish Netherlands. The defence of those Provinces against the aggression of powerful neighbours had by this time become an established principle of English diplomacy. To that principle Sir William Temple gave a fresh application when, in 1668, his patient and patriotic labours brought about a triple alliance between England, Sweden, and the United Provinces; Louis XIV, to his lasting chagrin, was arrested in the full tide of conquest, and by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1668) was compelled to relax his hold on the Free County of Burgundy. Still, he was permitted to retain the towns and districts of Charleroi, Binche, Ath, Douai, Tournai, Oudenarde, Armentières, Courtrai, Bergues, and Furnes, and thus to secure for France an impregnable frontier between Dunkirk and Charleroi.

Having accomplished so much, Louis next turned to deal with the triple allies who had baulked him of a still greater prize. Sweden was always disposed to be complaisant towards France; Charles II was effectually squared by the Treaty of Dover (1670); the Dutch were never forgiven.

Four years after the Treaty of Aix Louis launched his attack upon the United Provinces (1672). The attack was

conceived in a spirit of measureless contempt for, and blind rage against, the 'insolent merchants' who had dared to frustrate the well-laid plans of the Most Christian King. The Dutchmen were republicans, they were Protestants, they were prosperous in trade and powerful in arms; above all, they stood between Louis and his darling project: the incorporation of the Spanish Netherlands and the attainment of the Rhine frontier from source to delta. The war of 1672 was a campaign of hatred, and the passion, so inimical to coolness in arms or in diplomacy, recoiled upon the man who indulged it. For this war proved to be the turning-point in the reign of the *Grand Monarque*. 'In Holland', says the greatest of modern French historians, 'the political system of France made shipwreck.' All the maxims of statecraft bequeathed to Louis XIV by Henri IV, by Richelieu, by Mazarin, and Colbert were, in a moment of passion, forgotten. Policy was quenched in mad thirst for revenge. The Palatinate was laid waste; Franche-Comté was conquered; the Jura became—for the first time—the eastern frontier of France. But brilliant as were his victories in the field, more permanent forces were working against Louis XIV. The attack upon the Provinces brought back to power the Orange party, and, in William III, Louis XIV encountered an opponent of indomitable persistence. England, dragged into the struggle on the side of France by the cupidity, or, as some will have it, by the Machiavellian astuteness, of Charles II, withdrew from the war in 1674. But the nation was true to its ancient faith. The French attack was launched against 'the natural frontier of England', and England was 'in a flame'. Parliament ceased to be supine; a shower of pamphlets issued from a press which was just beginning to realize its power. In April 1677 the French ambassador warned his Government that Members of Parliament were ready 'to sell even the shirts off their backs to maintain a war against France for the preservation of the Netherlands'.[1] Even a Stuart felt obliged to bow to the storm. The marriage of the Princess Mary to the Prince of Orange announced the change of

[1] Rousset, *Louvois*, ii. 309, quoted ap. Firth, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

policy (November 4, 1677); Parliament voted supplies with a lavish hand, and early in 1678 England re-entered the war in opposition to France. But Charles II was incurably double-minded; his ways were hopelessly unstable, and in May 1678 he concluded with Louis XIV another secret treaty, by which he engaged to disband his army and to prorogue Parliament. In July the Dutch came to terms with France, and a definitive treaty was concluded at Nimeguen. France retained Franche-Comté and a strong line of fortresses, including Ypres, Maubeuge, Saint Omer, and Valenciennes, stretching from Dunkirk to the Meuse. On the other hand, many of the towns acquired in 1668 were handed back to the Spanish Netherlands to protect the Dutch against future attack. But by far the most significant result of the war was personal. It confided to the Prince of Orange the championship of European liberty.

William III was firmly resolved to save Europe from the domination of France. To this end he formed, in 1686, the League of Augsburg. But no merely continental coalition would, as he perceived, avail. He entered, therefore, into negotiation with the opponents of his Stuart father-in-law, and in 1688 he accepted their invitation to come to England. The Stuarts owed their undoing to their Gallican and Roman Catholic sympathies. The instinct of their subjects was perfectly sound. The English people do not, as a rule, follow the intricacies of continental diplomacy either closely or intelligently. But they have a few unalterable prejudices, and of these the strongest is, as we have seen, relentless hostility to any Power which threatens the European equilibrium or the independence of the Low Countries. Louis XIV was a palpable transgressor; Louis XIV must therefore be crushed, even if the process involved the substitution of a Dutchman for a gallicized Scot. William III had as little liking for the English people as they for him, but he submitted to the inconvenience and humiliation of wearing a 'constitutional' crown for the sake of achieving his purpose as a European diplomatist.

The war which was closed, or rather interrupted, by the

Treaty of Ryswick (1697) was, as the protagonists were aware, a mere prologue to a greater drama. Both Louis XIV and William wanted to take breath before the mortal combat. For that combat William prepared Europe by the formation of the Grand Alliance in 1701. Even then, however, his supreme purpose might have been frustrated by the English Parliament had not his opponent made a colossal blunder.

The English people would never have gone to war about the 'Spanish Succession' had not Louis XIV, in arrogant folly, occupied Luxemburg, Namur, Mons, Charleroi, Oudenarde, and the sea towns of Ostend and Nieuport. The recognition of the 'Old Pretender' added fuel to the flames of English anger, and a few months later (March 1702) William III died happy in the knowledge that his life's purpose was achieved, and that the execution of his policy was safe in the hands of the greatest soldier ever reared in England.

The victories of Marlborough, with a single brilliant exception, were all won in the 'cockpit' of Europe. Dean Swift, writing for once as a venal scribe, might denounce the strategy of the Whigs and their self-seeking General. But the argument of the *Conduct of the Allies* was as paradoxical as it was brilliant. In making the Netherlands his principal campaigning ground the Duke of Marlborough was faithful to the ingrained instincts of the English people, nor did he betray their interests. Still less did the Tories, in concluding peace, surrender any principle which it was important to maintain. On the contrary, the Treaty of Utrecht secured to this country great and manifold advantages: in the Mediterranean; in North America; in the South Seas; but not the least of the advantages gained at Utrecht was the stipulation in regard to the Low Countries. The Spanish Netherlands passed to the Austrian Habsburgs, by whom they soon came to be regarded as an intolerable incubus, gladly exchanged in 1815 for Italian territory. By the 'Barrier Treaty', which England guaranteed, the Dutch obtained the right to garrison a line of fortresses—Namur, Tournai, Menin, Furnes, Warneton, Ypres, and Knocque—stretching from the Meuse to the sea. The net result of the war was security for the Dutch, and an

emphatic reassertion of the established principle that neither France nor a nominee of France should ever be permitted to retain possession of Belgium. To this end we had fought one of the greatest of our wars.

A greater was still to come. Among the lovers of peace the younger Pitt was one of the most ardent. Trained in the school of Adam Smith, he was ambitious to initiate far-reaching domestic reforms: fiscal, administrative, and economic. Even after the outbreak of the revolution in France he did not abandon his objects or the hope of attaining them. So late as February 1792 he ventured to anticipate for Europe a period of prolonged peace; and his famous sinking-fund scheme was based upon that anticipation. Never was fate more perversely ironical. Within a year England had plunged into a war from which she did not finally emerge until 1815.

What was the force which drew us into the vortex? Many things combined to inflame passions between England and France, but the immediate and essential causes of the war were curiously parallel to those which, in August 1914, compelled the intervention of Great Britain against Germany. Ardently as he desired the maintenance of peace, Pitt refused to permit the French Republic to make void, at its will, a solemn international obligation, or to threaten the integrity of Belgium. By the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) the navigation of the Scheldt had been definitely and exclusively reserved to the Dutch. In 1793 the French Republic declared it to be open to all nations. The excuse put forward for this high-handed action was hardly less obnoxious than the original offence; the Convention affirmed 'that the river takes its rise in France, and that a nation which has obtained its liberty cannot recognize a system of feudalism, much less adhere to it'. Pitt promptly disavowed this spurious sentiment and repudiated the subversive doctrine on which it rested. 'England', he declared, 'will never consent that another Power shall arrogate the power of annulling at her pleasure and under the pretence of a pretended natural right the political system of Europe established by solemn treaties and guaranteed by the consent of all the Powers.'

It was not, however, only with false doctrine that England was at war. Before the end of 1792 France had invaded Belgium and was threatening Holland. She fell back before the advance of the Allies in 1793, but in the following year she again occupied and annexed Belgium, and in 1795 Holland was transformed into the Batavian Republic in close dependence upon France. Henceforward, for nearly twenty years Belgium formed an integral part of France and, like the rest of the country, was divided up in symmetrical departments.

It has long been the fashion to assert that in joining the Allies against France in 1793 Pitt was guilty of a grave error. In the light of recent events the Whig historians must be invited to revise their text-books. If the argument of this chapter is sound Pitt had no option. Unless he was prepared to see international engagements torn up by a single Power he was bound to protest against the opening of the Scheldt; unless he was prepared to defy the unbroken tradition of English policy he was bound to resist the incorporation of Belgium into France. A distinguished Viennese historian has himself insisted that it was the French absorption of Belgium which 'lent an irreconcilable character to the war with Britain and made that Power a central factor in European politics'.[1]

No one realized the importance of the Low Countries more clearly than Napoleon. Towards the close of 1800 he declared to his confidant, Roederer, that, if necessary, he would fight single-handed against the world 'to keep the Stadtholder out of Holland and to retain for France Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine'. His refusal to evacuate Holland contributed substantially to the rupture of the Peace of Amiens in 1803. To Antwerp he devoted special attention when he was preparing for the invasion of England in 1804–5. A dockyard was to be constructed big enough to contain twenty-five battleships, with a corresponding flotilla of frigates and sloops; a gigantic fortress was to be built on the opposite side of the River Scheldt to protect the dockyard and arsenal, and so Antwerp would be 'a loaded pistol held at the head of England'.[2]

[1] Auguste Fournier, *Napoleon I*, i. 86.
[2] Rose, *Napoleon*, i. 439.

To this truth and all that it imported Lord Castlereagh was as keenly alive as Napoleon. It was this which in 1809 inspired the scheme of an expedition to Walcheren, a scheme brilliantly conceived by Castlereagh and disastrously executed by Lord Chatham and Sir Richard Strachan. It was this which Castlereagh had ever in mind during the peace negotiations in 1813 and 1814. We can imagine, therefore, Castlereagh's dismay when, in November 1813, Metternich proposed that France should be allowed to retain the line of the Rhine, which included Antwerp, the Scheldt, and Flushing, as well as the whole of Flanders. 'I must particularly entreat you', he wrote to Aberdeen (November 13, 1813), 'to keep your attention upon Antwerp. The destruction of that arsenal is essential to our safety. To leave it in the hands of France is little short of imposing upon Great Britain the charge of a perpetual war establishment.'[1]

The allied Sovereigns yielded to the cogent reasoning of Castlereagh and unanimously resolved to prosecute the war without relaxation. Meanwhile, the British Cabinet, acutely conscious of the fact that in the recent negotiations at Frankfort less than due regard had been paid by the Allies to the views and interests of Great Britain, decided to invite Lord Castlereagh himself to represent them in the Councils of the Allies. Castlereagh accepted the honourable but anxious mission, and in the last week of the year 1813 a series of Cabinet Councils was held to discuss the instructions which should be given to the British Plenipotentiary. The Cabinet sat on Christmas Eve, on Christmas Day, and on Sunday the 26th. It rose at half-past six on Sunday. On Monday (December 27) Lord Castlereagh and his suite started for Harwich, whence he sailed for Holland, *en route* for Bâle.

There still exists in the archives of the Foreign Office a memorandum marked 'most secret and confidential', and bearing on its face conclusive testimony in the shape of corrections, re-corrections, and interlineations to the prolonged and anxious deliberations of which it was the final outcome. In that memorandum Lord Castlereagh was instructed to

[1] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, third series, i. 74.

state in general terms that if the Maritime Power of France were 'restricted within due bounds by the effectual establishment of Holland, the Peninsula, and Italy in security and independence', but not otherwise, Great Britain would be inclined to 'apply the greater portion of her conquests to promote the general interests'. If pressed for details he was to make it clear that there were two objects on which Great Britain would insist and without which she would refuse to give up any of her conquests: first, 'the absolute exclusion of France from any naval establishment on the Scheldt, and especially at Antwerp', and, secondly, 'the security of Holland being adequately provided for, under the House of Orange, by a barrier which shall at least include Juliers and Antwerp, as well as Maestricht, with a suitable arrondissement of territory in addition to Holland as it stood in 1792'.[1]

The result of these instructions is familiar to all students of the history of this period, but it is less generally recognized how commanding was the influence which during the critical months that followed Castlereagh exercised upon the Allies. A brilliant French statesman-historian has thus appraised it: 'In mind honest and penetrating, in character prudent and firm, capable at once of vigour and address, having in his manner the proud simplicity of the English, he was called to exercise, and did exercise, the greatest influence. . . . With his character and instructions you might almost say that England itself had risen up and formed the camp of the Coalesced Sovereigns'.[2] The prime object of Castlereagh's solicitude was the independence and integrity of the Low Countries, threatened, in 1814, by the ambition of France. To leave Antwerp in the hands of France was, in Castlereagh's view, as in Napoleon's, to point a loaded pistol at the head of England.

What was true of France in 1814 is true of Germany in 1914. For Great Britain, quite apart from questions of international obligations, no peace was or is possible which leaves Belgium or Holland in the hands of a potential enemy. Napoleon

[1] I owe my first knowledge of the existence of this most interesting and important Memorandum to an anonymous article which appeared in the *Morning Post*, December 26, 1913.

[2] Thiers, *Consulate and Empire*, xvii. 199.

realized this truth to the full, and confessed to Colonel Campbell at Elba that for the sake of Antwerp he had lost the throne of France. If Castlereagh had not insisted upon the giving up of Belgium, peace, he declared, would have been made at Châtillon.[1] Without corroboration Napoleon can never be believed ; but, in this instance, he spoke truly.

Napoleon's abdication did not, however, solve the problem of Belgium. To the Austrian Habsburgs it had been, as we saw, a perpetual nuisance ever since they had acquired it at the Peace of Utrecht, and they had made repeated attempts to exchange it, if possible, for Bavaria. But Bavaria, caressed by Napoleon, had prudently insured against his overthrow by the Treaty of Ried. Disappointed of Bavaria, the Habsburgs were glad to give up Belgium in exchange for Venice. But what was to become of Belgium?

The idea of the formation of a strong barrier-State, intermediate between France and Germany, had long been in the minds of European diplomatists. Lord Grenville had suggested it as long ago as 1798. In 1814 the opportunity for achieving it had manifestly come. Accordingly, by the first Treaty of Paris (1814), Belgium was united with Holland in a kingdom of the Netherlands under the House of Orange-Nassau.

The union thus consummated proved to be singularly ill-assorted. Between the Dutch of the Northern Provinces and the Flemings and Walloons of the South there was little in common. Racially they were akin, but despite the large admixture of Flemish blood the peoples of the Belgian Provinces were powerfully attracted towards France, of which country they had for twenty years actually formed part. In creed and in historical tradition North and South were sharply divided, and the division was accentuated by commercial rivalry. Nevertheless, a conciliatory policy on the part of the House of Orange, if steadily pursued after 1815, might have done much to obliterate differences and to weld North and South into a united Power, if not into a homogeneous people. Such policy was conspicuous by its absence. King William

[1] Rose, *op. cit.*, ii. 399.

of the Netherlands was, as Palmerston's biographer wittily phrased it, 'one of those clever men who constantly do foolish things, and one of those obstinate men who support one bad measure by another worse.'[1] The Dutch, though numerically inferior, treated Belgium almost as a conquered province, imposing upon it disproportionate burdens and denying it equal opportunities. They made, in fact, no secret of their intention to absorb Belgium into Holland. This policy was deeply resented and stoutly opposed by the Belgian patriots, and they found staunch allies in the Clericals, who were greatly incensed against the Calvinist authorities of Holland. Thus in 1830, as in 1790, the Clericals and Democrats of Belgium combined against an alien ruler, and both found encouragement and opportunity in the French revolution of July, and in the general upheaval which ensued thereon.

Into the details of the Belgian insurrection it is unnecessary to enter. The Powers were, for the most part, opposed to the destruction of a corner-stone of the diplomatic edifice of 1814, but the Belgians found a warm friend in Lord Palmerston, who became Foreign Secretary in the Ministry of Lord Grey in 1830. Palmerston was convinced that the recognition of Belgian independence was the only alternative to its absorption by France, and to the latter alternative he was as strongly opposed as Burleigh or Pitt or Castlereagh. But the danger of absorption was by no means remote. The Belgians themselves elected as their king the Duc de Nemours, the second son of King Louis-Philippe. Palmerston bluntly declined to allow a French prince to wear the Belgian crown, and by a combination of firmness and adroitness he induced Louis-Philippe not only to decline the Crown, on his son's behalf, but to admit the candidature of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, a German by blood, but an Englishman by residence and sympathies, and the sometime consort of the Princess Charlotte, the heiress-presumptive to the English throne.

On June 26, 1831, Prince Leopold accepted, not without hesitation, the Belgian Crown. The hesitation was justified; for the situation which confronted the new monarch was

[1] Lord Dalling, *Palmerston*, ii. 2.

appallingly difficult. The Dutch, refusing the *bases de séparation*, upon the ratification of which Leopold's acceptance of the Crown was conditional, marched 50,000 men into Belgium. The latter appealed for help to France and England. Louis-Philippe complied, and a French army occupied Belgium. War between France and Holland—perhaps a general European conflagration—was averted only by the diplomacy of Lord Palmerston. But the situation was still critical. Great Britain could not contemplate a French occupation of Belgium, and Lord Palmerston told Louis-Philippe plainly that his troops could remain there only on pain of war with England. But French troops could not be withdrawn until Belgium was secured against the attack of Holland. The dilemma appeared insoluble. It was ultimately solved by the combined firmness, patience, and tact of Lord Palmerston on the one side, and on the other by the genuine anxiety of Louis-Philippe to keep on good terms with England. Not, however, until 1833 did Holland acquiesce in the decision of the Powers to recognize Belgian independence, and not until 1839 was this acquiescence embodied in a definite treaty. That treaty was concluded between Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia on the one part and the Netherlands (Holland) on the other, and was signed in London on April 19, 1839. It constitutes the charter and defines the international position of the modern kingdom of Belgium. It places the independence, the neutrality, and the territorial integrity of Belgium under the guarantee of the five Great Powers. This was not, as Lord Clarendon pointed out in 1867, a mere collective undertaking. It was an individual obligation imposed by each Power on itself.[1]

Thus ended a troublesome and dangerous episode. That the issue was relatively peaceful and completely satisfactory was due mainly to Lord Palmerston. Thanks to his plain dealing three definite results had been achieved: an essential part of the settlement of 1814 had been destroyed without involving Europe in war; an independent Belgian kingdom, pledged to perpetual neutrality, had been brought into being under a constitutional monarchy and a European guarantee;

[1] *Hansard*, vol. clxxxviii. 152.

and France, though the most effusive and most effective friend of Belgium, had been compelled to forgo any hope of territorial acquisition or political advantage for herself. Truly, a diplomatic achievement of which Great Britain and Lord Palmerston might well be proud.

As regards three of the parties to the Treaty of London, the obligations accepted in 1839 were, as we have seen, specifically and solemnly renewed in 1870. Prussia, France, and Great Britain may therefore be said to stand in a special relation to Belgian neutrality and independence.

On August 4, 1914, one of the three Powers shamelessly broke its plighted word. 'This morning the armed forces of Germany entered Belgian territory in violation of Treaty engagements.'[1] That grievous wrong was thereby done to Belgium was not denied at Berlin. The invasion constituted, as Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg admitted, 'a breach of international law'.[2] To repair that breach Great Britain and the whole British Empire flew to arms.

In the foregoing pages an attempt has been made to concentrate attention upon a single point of quite exceptional significance. Between the people of England and the people of the Netherlands there has existed for a thousand years a connexion and a friendship almost unbroken. In its origin it was based largely on an obvious geographical fact; but other considerations, political, strategical, dynastic, and, above all, economic, quickly and firmly cemented it.

It was remarked by Bossuet and repeated by De Witt that the English people are more unstable than the sea which encircles them. Fickleness and uncertainty are the characteristics most commonly attributed to our diplomacy by continental observers. But to one maxim of statecraft, to one line of policy, England has been, as the above pages prove, extraordinarily constant. Against the predominance of any one Power we have always stood as adamant, and we have consistently used the Low Countries as the most con-

[1] M. Davignon, Belgian Foreign Minister, ap. *Collected Diplomatic Documents*, p. 321.

[2] Speech in Reichstag, August 4, 1914.

venient weapon with which to resist that predominance. Each Power which has in turn threatened the European equilibrium has announced its ambitious design by an assault upon the independence of the Low Countries. By the side of the Low Countries England has invariaby arrayed herself.

It has mattered nothing what dynasty has been on the throne, or what party has been in power: Plantagenets and Lancastrians, Yorkists and Tudors, Whigs, Tories, and Radicals—all alike have accepted it as a fixed and pivotal maxim of English policy, that the Low Countries must never be at the disposal of any Power—be it Spanish, French, or Prussian—which is in a position to threaten the 'liberties of Europe'.

Happily, the crisis of 1914 has provided no exception to an unbroken rule. Never have the ancient saws of British policy been reaffirmed with more complete unanimity and more determined purpose. Never has the resentment of the English people been more passionately aroused than by the treacherous, cynical and brutal assault of Germany upon Belgium. Never has English sympathy gone out more truly and more tenderly than to the innocent and hapless victims of German 'Kultur'—the heroic and suffering people who have always been our friends and are now our guests.

CHAPTER IX

THE PROBLEM OF POLAND. I[1]

'The future of Europe really depends on the ultimate destiny of Poland.'—NAPOLEON I.

'Poland will live again. By the will of Tsar Nicholas II, supported by France and England, an end will be put to one of the greatest crimes in history.'—M. CLÉMENCEAU, August 16, 1914.

'LA question *la plus exclusivement européenne* est celle qui concerne la Pologne.' Thus wrote Talleyrand to Metternich during the Congress of Vienna, precisely one hundred years ago. It may be doubted whether the full significance of Talleyrand's words was adequately apprehended by the diplomatists of 1815. It is certain that since that time the deeper meaning of the words has for the most part eluded historical commentators. Every student of European history is, of course, aware that among the problems which confronted and perplexed the monarchs and diplomatists assembled at Vienna not the least complicated was that of Poland. A solution was, for the time at least, provided by the firmness and promptitude of the Tsar Alexander. Inspired on the one hand by the liberal enthusiasm of his Polish counsellor Prince Adam Czartoryski, on the other by the promptings of an ambition as generous as it was shrewd, the Tsar insisted upon the restoration of an independent kingdom of Poland. He insisted further, that of the revived kingdom he must himself be the first king. These resolutions brought the Tsar into sharp conflict with Metternich, who was supported by Great Britain, France, and Holland. At the beginning of 1815 a secret treaty was concluded between the latter Powers, and war between them and their Eastern allies seemed imminent

[1] Published in the *Edinburgh Review* for April 1915.

when news reached Vienna which caused all such minor dissensions to be put aside and the bonds of alliance to be drawn closer than ever before. Napoleon had escaped from Elba, had landed at Cannes, and was once more Emperor of the French. The restoration of the Empire was followed by the episode of the 'Hundred Days', an episode closed by the victory of Wellington and Blücher at Waterloo. In regard to Poland, Alexander's will prevailed and the 'Congress Kingdom' came into being.

Five years ago a brilliant French critic introduced to French readers a remarkable work from the pen of a Polish statesman.[1] In performing this function M. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu employs language which curiously recalls that of Talleyrand at Vienna.

'La question polonaise', he writes, 'est essentiellement une question européenne dont aucun Européen, dont aucun Français surtout, ne peut se désintéresser, car d'elle dépend l'avenir de l'Europe, le maintien ou la ruine de ce qui reste de l'équilibre européen, la balance des pouvoirs et le sort des alliances.'

M. Leroy-Beaulieu's meaning is illustrated and amplified in M. Dmowski's singularly interesting and temperate treatise. M. Dmowski, it should be said, writes on this subject with unique authority. He represented Warsaw in the second and third Dumas, and, as leader of the Polish Parliamentary Group, was the principal exponent in the Duma of the nationalist aspirations of his fellow countrymen. His work, *La Question polonaise*, has a twofold significance. On the one hand, it is at once a revelation and an illustration of the change which since the fiasco of 1863 has passed over the spirit of Poland's dream. On the other hand, it explains with admirable lucidity the close connexion between the national aspirations of Poland and the international situation in Europe as a whole.

'Cette lutte [for Polish liberties] a une portée immense non seulement pour l'existence nationale des Polonais, mais pour l'Europe tout entière. Pour que l'Europe entière n'en vienne pas un jour à être gouvernée sur des ordres de Berlin, il faut

[1] *La Question polonaise*, par R. Dmowski. (Paris, Colin, 1909.)

que la nation polonaise conquière les conditions d'un développement rapide, la possibilité d'un travail large et fécond, et par là les forces nécessaires pour mener à bien une lutte historique longue et difficile. . . Le principal danger qui menace l'existence nationale de la Pologne réside dans l'accroissement disproportionné de la puissance allemande sous la direction de la Prusse. . . Les peuples slaves voient leur existence menacée par l'accroissement de l'influence allemande sur leurs territoires; ils comprennent que c'est le résultat de la lutte entre le polonisme et le germanisme qui décidera dans une grande mesure de leurs propres destinées. . . C'est précisément par ce lien qui la rattache à la cause de tous les Slaves et à la question du rôle de l'Allemagne dans toute l'Europe orientale, que la question polonaise, sous sa forme actuelle, est d'une importance capitale, et cela non seulement pour les seuls Polonais, mais, nous le répétons, pour l'Europe tout entière.'

Considerations such as these go far to explain the importance attached to the proclamation issued to the Poles by the Grand Duke Nicholas in August 1914. The full text of that Proclamation is as follows:

'Poles!

'The hour has struck in which the sacred dream of your fathers and forefathers may find fulfilment.

'A century and a half ago, the living flesh of Poland was torn asunder, but her soul did not die. She lived in hope that there would come an hour for the resurrection of the Polish Nation and for sisterly reconciliation with Russia.

'The Russian Army now brings you the joyful tidings of this reconciliation. May the boundaries be annulled which cut the Polish Nation to pieces! May that Nation re-unite into one body under the sceptre of the Russian Emperor. Under this sceptre Poland shall be re-born, free in Faith, in language, in self-government.

'One thing only Russia expects of you: equal consideration for the rights of those nationalities to which history has linked you.

'With open heart, with hand fraternally outstretched, Russia steps forward to meet you. She believes that the Sword has not rusted which, at Grünwald, struck down the enemy. From the shores of the Pacific to the North Seas, the Russian armies are on the march. The dawn of a new life is breaking for you.

'May there shine, resplendent above that dawn, the sign

of the Cross, symbol of the Passion and Resurrection of Nations!

'(Signed)

'Commander-in-Chief General Adjutant

'NICHOLAS.

'1 (14) August, 1914.'[1]

A month later, when Russian troops had invaded Galicia, the promise contained in the Grand Duke's manifesto was repeated, even more specifically, and in the name of the Tsar Nicholas himself:

'If, with God's help, he is victorious, His Imperial Majesty promises to unite in one autonomous nation all the parts of ancient Poland which are under the sway of Germany, Austria, and Russia, and to revive Poland under the sovereignty of the Emperor of Russia.'

As to the precise degree of significance to be attributed to the Proclamations opinions naturally differ. In some quarters there has been a disposition to regard them as a mere 'artifice of war'; it has been pointed out that similar Proclamations were issued by the German allies; that expectations not less exalted were held out to the Poles a century ago by the Tsar Alexander, and that they remain unfulfilled. But it is noteworthy that the motives of the Russian Government are least mistrusted in quarters where suspicion would be most pardonable. Representatives of the leading democratic parties in Poland—the Democratic National Party, the Polish Progressive Party, the Realistic Party, and the Polish Progressive Union—met in Warsaw on August 16, and in response to the Grand Duke's Proclamation they forthwith issued the following important manifesto:

'The representatives welcome the Proclamation . . . as an act of the foremost historical importance, and implicitly believe that upon the termination of the war, the promises uttered in that proclamation will be formally fulfilled, that the dreams of their forefathers will be realized, that Poland's flesh, torn asunder a century and a half ago, will once again be made whole, that the frontiers severing the Polish nation will vanish.

[1] The above Proclamation was issued in the Polish language, in the *Gazetta Warszawska* of August 16. It is here reproduced by kind permission from Miss Laurence Alma Tadema's pamphlet, *Poland, Russia, and the War.*

The blood of Poland's sons, shed in united combat against the Germans, will serve as a sacrifice upon the altar of her Resurrection.'[1]

It would, perhaps, be pedantic to expect more precise and particular definition in proclamations issued at a moment of high political excitement and intended for popular consumption. The appeal must necessarily be to sentiment, and the force of sentiment might well be impaired by precision. Prudence also may forbid excessive particularization. The publicist is, however, entitled, and indeed required, to scrutinize the language of the Grand Duke somewhat more closely.

That the living flesh of Poland was torn asunder by the Partitions of the eighteenth century is undeniable. Equally undeniable is it that ever since those days the Polish nation has lived in hope of a resurrection. The desire for 'sisterly reconciliation with Russia' is, however, a sentiment of more dubious authenticity, or at any rate of more recent growth. It was not manifested very vividly in 1830 or in 1863. Again: 'the boundaries which cut the Polish nation to pieces are to be annulled.' But which boundaries? What is to be the *terminus a quo*? Are you going to start from the *status quo ante*-Partition—say from 1770? Or do you mean to go farther back? You allude to Grünwald—to the famous victory won, in 1410, by the Poles against the Teutonic Knights near Tannenberg. Do you then mean to claim for Poland the Duchy of East Prussia, as well as West Prussia and Posen? These are merely samples of the many questions which the pedantic historian, perhaps also the practical politician, would fain address to the Grand Duke Nicholas, to the Polish democrats, and to all those sympathizers who throughout the world have enthusiastically applauded the Grand Duke's Proclamation.

Whatever line the authentic answers may eventually take, one thing is immediately and indisputably clear: the Proclamation of August 14 is a document of first-rate historical importance, and it challenges, in an acute and arresting fashion,

[1] Cf. L. Alma Tadema, *Poland, Russia, and the War*, p. 14.

a final solution of an historic problem. To sketch the historical evolution of that problem, and to examine critically its bearings, is the purpose of the pages that follow.

During the later Middle Ages and well beyond them ; before the many Russias had attained to any semblance of unity ; before the Hohenzollern had set foot in Brandenburg ; before the Habsburgs had acquired either Bohemia or Hungary and while their position in Germany was still far from established ; before Constantinople had fallen to the Turks ; while the issue of the Hundred Years' War between England and France was still uncertain ; before the Spanish Kingdoms had united under the Habsburgs ; while the Moriscoes were still in Granada ; Poland was the greatest Power in Eastern Europe and among the foremost Powers of the Continent. Formless, and, save for its superb river-system, featureless, the great plain of Poland stretched at one time from the Baltic to the Black Sea, almost from the line of the Oder, to that of the Dwina and the Dnieper, from Danzig in the north-west to Kiev in the south-east, from beyond Cracow in the south-west to beyond Witebsk in the north-east.[1] But the heart of Poland proper is and always has been the basin of the Vistula. Much of the soil is fertile ; iron, copper, and lead are procurable in considerable profusion, while the salt-mines of Cracow have always formed a coveted source of wealth.

Poland emerges into the light of authentic history in the later years of the tenth century, when she accepted Christianity —unlike the Russias—in its Western, i. e. Roman form. Towards the end of the fourteenth century she had taken her place as one of the great Powers of Europe. The marriage (in 1386) of her Queen Jadwiga to Jagiello, Grand Duke of the adjacent land of Lithuania, at once established Poland's territorial position and gave a decisive bias to her policy. Including, as at one time it did, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Lusatia, and Pomerania, Poland might have been expected to challenge the German Kingdom in Central Europe and to aspire to a place in the States-system of the West. But

[1] These limits, of course, include Lithuania and Courland, Volhynia, Podolia, and the Ukraine.

between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries Poland lost most of her western territories, while the union with Lithuania drew her irresistibly towards the north-east.

In that region she found herself in conflict with the famous military Order of the Teutonic Knights. These Knights, one of the many Orders called into existence by the Crusades, were summoned in the thirteenth century to the task of conquering, civilizing, colonizing, and christianizing the heathen lands along the Baltic littoral. Early in the fourteenth century the Order established its head-quarters at Marienburg, and from there directed an elaborate political organization extending over Prussia and Livonia and some parts of Lithuania and Pomerania. Under the influence of excessive wealth and prosperity the Order rapidly degenerated, and, in 1410, on the historic field of Grünwald, near Tannenberg, it sustained a crushing defeat at the hands of the Polish King Ladislas. From that defeat the Order never recovered, and in 1466 the Poles dictated to the Knights the terms of the famous Treaty of Thorn. Once again the Poles regained the command of the mouths of the Vistula; the district of West Prussia, including the cities of Danzig, Thorn, and Marienburg, was incorporated in the Kingdom of Poland, while the district of East Prussia was restored to the Knights, to be held by them henceforward in fief from the Polish Crown. The Teutonic Order was secularized, at Luther's suggestion, in 1525, and the then Grand Master, Albert of Hohenzollern, became the first hereditary Duke of East Prussia, still holding the Duchy as a vassal of Poland. The Prussian Hohenzollern became extinct in 1618, and by an arrangement, known as an *Erbverbrüderung*, the inheritance passed to the Hohenzollern Electors of Brandenburg. By the Treaty of Wehlau (1657) the latter succeeded in throwing off the suzerainty of Poland, and when, in 1701, they attained to kingly rank, they took their title not from the Electoral Mark of Brandenburg but from the still isolated Duchy of East Prussia. This choice, apparently fortuitous, was not devoid of high political significance.

Thus early in their career had the Hohenzollern come into

conflict with the neighbouring Slavonic people with whose fortunes their own were destined to be so closely intermingled. Meanwhile, the Polish Kingdom had already attained and passed the meridian of its greatness. The beginning of its decline is usually dated from the end of the sixteenth century. Thirty years earlier its security had seemed to be cemented by the compact of Lublin (1569). Under that instrument the connexion with Lithuania, hitherto merely personal, was converted into an organic legislative union. Hardly had the union been consummated when a heavy blow befell the united realm. In 1572 the male line of the Jagiellos—the House under which Poland-Lithuania had attained to a position of dazzling ascendancy in Eastern Europe—became extinct. The Polish monarchy was henceforward exposed, in grim reality, to all the perils and uncertainties involved in an elective throne.

Precisely two centuries separated the extinction of the Jagiellos from the first Partition. During the whole of that period Poland plays a considerable part in European politics, and is responsible for one or two brilliant episodes. The first is supplied by the reign of Stephen Batory, who, after the flight of Henry of Valois, was elected to the Polish throne (1675). Batory, 'by his sole merit', to adopt Krasinski's phrase, 'had risen from the rank of a simple Hungarian gentleman to the dignity of sovereign prince of Transylvania', and proved himself, in the same writer's judgement, to be 'the greatest monarch that Poland has ever possessed'. Whether this praise be deserved or no, Stephen undoubtedly left his mark, despite the brevity of his reign (1575–86), no less upon the domestic institutions than upon the external position of his kingdom. He founded the University of Wilna; he organized the famous Cossack regiments; he temporarily repressed the selfish and suicidal turbulence of the Polish aristocracy, and, finally, by vigorous opposition to the Tsar of Muscovy, Ivan the Terrible, he acquired the whole of Livonia for Poland, thus thrusting back the Russians from long-coveted access to the Baltic littoral. His own subjects he treated with a frankness which was indicative of his independence, and might, if taken to heart,

have saved theirs. 'Poles,' he said, 'you owe your preservation not to laws, for you know them not; nor to government, for you respect it not; you owe it to nothing but chance.'

Chance served them ill during the next two centuries. On Stephen's death Boris Godunoff, then virtually ruler of the Russias, made a vigorous attempt to secure the throne of Poland for his brother-in-law, the reigning Tsar. The terms he offered to the Poles were sufficiently alluring. The two peoples were to be united in eternal and indissoluble friendship; Russian arms would be ever ready to defend Poland and Lithuania against external foes; Esthonia was to be cleared of Danes and Swedes and annexed, with the exception of Narva, to Poland-Lithuania; similarly, the Turks were to be expelled from Moldavia, Wallachia, Servia, Bosnia, and Hungary, and these provinces were to be absorbed by Poland; freedom of intercourse and trade was to be guaranteed mutually to the subjects of both kingdoms, and the internal liberties of Poland to be scrupulously preserved. Perhaps the promises seemed too glowing. Anyhow the Polish oligarchy declined them, and the Crown was offered to and accepted by Sigismund Vasa, the lineal heir to the throne of Sweden, and, through his mother, a Jagiello. It is interesting to speculate how the fate of northern Europe might have been affected had Sweden, Lithuania, and Poland been united into a single kingdom. But Sigismund's ardent Catholicism forbade the experiment: the Swedish Lutherans would have none of him, while to the Jesuits in Poland he gave a free rein. Apart from the Jesuit persecutions, Sigismund's reign (1567–1632) is memorable chiefly for his attempt to impose upon the Russian throne a palpable Pretender in the person of the 'false Demetrius'. The attempt proved abortive, but in view of the reversed relations of the two Crowns in the eighteenth century it is not devoid of curious interest. At once ambitious and unsuccessful in his foreign policy Sigismund did nothing to remedy anarchy at home, and the situation, grave during his reign, grew rapidly worse under his sons and successors, Ladislas (1632–48) and John Casimir (1648–65). The latter—the last of the Vasa-Jagiello kings—found the situation insupportable, and in 1668

he abdicated.[1] Before, however, taking leave of his subjects he had given utterance to a remarkable prediction:

'God grant that I may be a false prophet, but I warn you that, unless you take steps to heal the diseases of the State, the Republic will become the prey of its neighbours. The Muscovites will do their utmost to detach the Russian provinces up to the Vistula. The greedy Hohenzollern will seize Great-Poland. Austria will pounce upon Cracow. Each of these Powers will prefer to partition Poland rather than possess it as a whole under the anarchical conditions of to-day.'[2]

John Casimir's abdication was followed by a perfect orgy of foreign intrigue at Warsaw. Louis XIV, in particular, made a vigorous effort to secure the Polish crown either for the Prince de Condé or his son, the Duc d'Enghien. He was foiled in his immediate purpose by the election of a noble of Ruthenian descent, Michael Korybut (1669–73), but he founded a tradition in French diplomacy which lasted until Poland itself was extinguished.[3] Michael's election meant one more nail in the coffin of Poland. The losses incurred by Poland had already, under John Casimir, been serious. The Treaty of Wehlau (1657) permitted the Hohenzollern to renounce Polish suzerainty over East Prussia; by the Treaty of Oliva (1660) Poland resigned to Sweden Esthonia, Livonia, and the island of Oesel; by that of Andruszovo (1667) she lost to Russia Smolensk, Kiev, and all the left bank of the Dnieper. It was not, however, only Germans, Swedes, and Russians who were advancing at the expense of Poland. In 1672 the Turkish Vizier, the famous Ahmad Kiuprili, dictated to the Poles the Treaty of Buczacz. The terms were terribly humiliating to their pride. They agreed to cede Podolia to the Sultan, to acknowledge his suzerainty over the Ukraine, and to pay an annual tribute of 220,000 ducats.[4]

[1] His farewell speech, in Latin, is still preserved in the Bodleian Library, MS. Rawlinson A 477 fol. 154.

[2] Cf. *Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France* (Pologne, par Louis Fargues. Paris, Alcan, 1885), p. lxxxi.

[3] Cf. *Recueil des Instructions*, a collection of diplomatic documents indispensable to the student of European politics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

[4] After Sobieski's successful campaign the Treaty of Buczacz was denounced.

The rot had manifestly set in, though its progress was temporarily hidden beneath the brilliant military achievements of John Sobieski (1674–96). Renowned as the conqueror of the Turks and the deliverer of Vienna, Sobieski did little, however, for his native country. The Tsar, Nicholas I, once remarked that John Sobieski and himself were the two most foolish kings Poland ever had, since they were the only Kings of Poland who had ever gone to the help of Austria. There was more than a grain of truth in the cynical remark. The interests of Poland might have been better served by leaving Vienna to its fate, and by a steady alliance with France. The Treaty of Carlowitz (1699) did indeed restore to Poland the Ukraine, Podolia, and Kamieniec, but Sobieski's achievements in the field had done nothing to arrest the decrepitude of his kingdom. After his death (1696) all the disintegrating forces acquired fresh momentum, but before we enter upon the last period of Poland's existence as an independent State, it may be well to see precisely what those forces were and how they severally contributed to the final catastrophe.

II.

Few events in the history of the modern world have left upon the mind and conscience of mankind an impression so ineffaceable as the erasure of Poland from the map of Europe. The rectification of frontiers, the shifting lines of political geography, do not as a rule touch human interest very closely. But the complete annihilation of an ancient State is a spectacle sufficiently rare and imposing to stir the most sluggish imagination. It is therefore natural that men should seek a detailed explanation of a failure so conspicuous and complete. Consequently the causes of Poland's decrepitude have been analysed with a minute assiduity which threatens to render them the commonplace of the school-boy essayist. It is, however, essential to a just apprehension of the present problem that they should be constantly before our minds, and it is necessary, therefore, very briefly to recall them. The causes, as usual, were partly external and objective, but much more internal

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and subjective. The destruction of Poland has been described, *ad nauseam*, as the most cynical crime in modern history. The cynicism of the partitioners can scarcely be exaggerated. But the event seems to present the characteristics less of a crime than of a tragedy. Professor Bradley, following Hegel, has taught that the essence of tragedy lies in the conjunction of some striking external misfortune and some canker of character within. Before a tragedy can be achieved—as distinct from the commission of a vulgar crime—there must be a traitor within the citadel.

Pre-eminently was this the case with the tragedy of Poland. The fortress was surrendered by treachery. Nevertheless, the multiplication of external enemies was sufficiently ominous: the consolidation of the Russias; the brilliant military exploits of the Vasa Kings of Sweden; the persistent progress of the Hohenzollern in North Germany; the increasing cohesion of Habsburg power in the South—all these things, mainly the fruit of the seventeenth century, unquestionably threatened the commanding position to which Poland had attained. But they offered an insufficient excuse for the singular fatuity which was characteristic, during that period, of Polish policy. During the first half of the seventeenth century, thanks to 'the collapse of Muscovite tsardom in the east and the submersion of the German Empire in the west by the Thirty Years' War, Poland had', as has been well pointed out, 'an unprecedented opportunity of consolidating once for all her hard-won position as the dominating Power of Central Europe'. It would then have been 'no difficult task for the Republic to have wrested the best part of the Baltic littoral from the Scandinavian Powers and driven the distracted Muscovites beyond the Volga. Permanent greatness and secular security were within her reach at the commencement of the Vasa period.'[1]

Why was the opportunity neglected? Why, instead of taking a bold offensive, did Poland suffer repeated blows at the hands of her neighbours—of Sweden, Russia, Brandenburg, and Austria—until, pitied by some but despised by all, her

[1] *A Short History of Austria-Hungary and Poland*, by H. W. Steed, W. A. Phillips, and D. Hannay.

name was finally erased from the map of Europe? 'The Republic', said Waclaw Rzewuski in bitter scorn, 'died long ago, only it has forgotten to tumble down.' The disease from which Poland suffered was indeed of long standing. What was its specific nature? Montesquieu's aphorism, as brilliant as it is penetrating and profound, supplies an unequivocal answer. 'L'indépendance de chaque particulier est l'objet des lois de la Pologne, et ce qui en résulte, l'oppression de tous.' While Poland was hugging the phantom of aristocratic 'liberty', Russia, Brandenburg, and even Sweden were submitting, more or less cheerfully, to the discipline of centralizing autocracies. In Poland, on the contrary, the monarchy was steadily losing ground. The monarchy had always been, in constitutional theory, elective, and after 1572 practice conformed to theory. At each vacancy the Crown was in fact put up to auction by the greedy and selfish aristocratic electors. A Frenchman, a Hungarian, three Swedes, one or two Gallophil Poles, two Saxon Kings nominated by Austria, and finally, the discarded lover of the Empress Catherine of Russia—such were the men upon whom during the last two centuries of 'independence' the oligarchy conferred the dubious honour of the Polish crown. It is little wonder that under these circumstances Warsaw became a hot-bed of foreign intrigue. France, in particular, took incessant pains to maintain French influence in Poland. In regard to the Crown itself neither Louis XIV nor Louis XV was particularly successful, but the *Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France* proves how minute and continuous was the attention which France devoted to Polish affairs, and how highly her rulers valued Poland as an asset in the diplomatic game. A superficial acquaintance with French politics, or even with the work of French publicists, will suffice to prove that the tradition of eighteenth-century diplomacy is still potent in the twentieth.

The Polish aristocracy not only elected their Kings: they imposed upon them, at each election, a humiliating capitulation known as the *Pacta Conventa*, which restricted the action of the Crown within the narrowest limits. The ridiculous

privilege of veto (*liberum veto*)[1] possessed by each individual member of the aristocratic Diet rendered hopeless all attempts at reform. The clergy, like many of the nobles, were enormously wealthy and possessed high privileges. For a hundred years or more after the Reformation Poland set the example of genuine religious toleration. The Diets of 1563, 1568, and 1569 conceded equal civil rights to the members of all religious denominations. Even Socinians and Anabaptists, though excluded from toleration even by the most liberal States, found in Poland not merely an asylum but a home. In the seventeenth century, however, the Jesuits became all powerful there as elsewhere, and Poland surrendered this eminent distinction. Thenceforward all non-Catholics or 'dissidents' were deprived not only of all special privileges, but of the ordinary rights of citizenship. True, those rights were restored in the latter part of the eighteenth century, but it was at the bidding of interfering foreigners and from motives that were wholly sinister. The social and economic condition of the country was not less hopeless than the political. The 'nation' consisted of 150,000 noble families. The mass of the people (though not entirely devoid of rights, were serfs, tied to the soil. A native middle-class did not exist: commerce was almost entirely in the hands of Germans and Jews, and the few towns, therefore, afforded no counterpoise to the power of the nobles and no avenue of ambition to the peasants.

Rotten within, Poland could offer no resistance to assaults from without. That her territory had remained so long intact was due chiefly to the fact that it had suited the interest and convenience of her neighbours to respect her nominal independence. Russia, in particular, was well content with the existing situation. From the moment (1733) when she put

[1] Neither the *Pacta Conventa* nor the *Liberum Veto* were, as is often erroneously supposed, institutions peculiar to Poland. Both devices find a place in one form or another in many medieval constitutions (cf. *Une Antithèse du Principe majoritaire en Droit polonais* by Dr. Konopczyński, pp. 336–47, ap. *Essays in Legal History* (ed. Vinogradoff, Oxford University Press, 1913). It was the unhappy fate of Poland not to have been able, like more fortunate countries, to emancipate herself from these oligarchical shackles. As a fact, the *Liberum Veto* was first exercised in Poland in 1652.

Augustus III of Saxony upon the Polish throne Russia treated Poland as a vassal State. Government in Poland there was none. The Saxon King rarely visited the 'Republic'; there was no central executive, no regular administrative system; the legislature met periodically at Grodno and Warsaw, but was rendered impotent by the *liberum veto*; each nobleman did what was right in his own eyes, and dealt as he would with the chattel-serfs. No other class, except that of the nobles, counted.

Such was the condition of affairs when, in 1763, Augustus III died. The moment was an intensely critical one for Poland, and indeed for Central Europe. The Seven Years' War had just ended. Despite the strength of the coalition opposed to him, Frederick the Great had managed to keep his hold on Silesia and to come through the war territorially unscathed. He would hardly have done it but for the opportune death of the most determined of his opponents, the Tsarina Elizabeth of Russia. Elizabeth entertained a conviction which has recently obtained an increasing measure of assent, that Prussia could be rendered harmless to her neighbours only by restricting the Hohenzollern to their original Brandenburg Electorate. East Prussia was to reward the sacrifices of Russia. Elizabeth's death (Jan. 2, 1762) saved Prussia. Her successor, Peter III, was a madman, a fanatical admirer of the Prussian King, and was permitted to reign only a few months. Still, his brief reign gave a new and fatal direction to Russian policy.

His widow Catherine II is generally accounted one of the shrewdest and most successful rulers Russia ever had. In the light of later events her Polish policy stands revealed as not merely a dastardly crime but a gigantic blunder. For the first Partition she was not primarily responsible. But if this fact is held to diminish the criminalty of Catherine, it enhances her stupidity. Had she stood firm against the criminal suggestion of Frederick the Great the game was in her hands. She threw away the trump cards by pursuing simultaneously two incompatible policies. The dream of a Slav Empire at Constantinople created for Russia the Polish

problem, and compelled Petersburg for a century and a half to pay to Berlin more deference than was consistent with self-interest or even with self-respect. France—the natural ally of Russia—had long been interested both in Turkey and in Poland. When Poland was threatened, France, powerless at the moment to afford direct assistance, pulled strings at Constantinople, and Catherine, attacked by the Turks, yielded to the solicitations of Prussia.

From the policy of Catherine we may turn for a moment to that of Prussia. Frederick's motives were as transparent as his success was unequivocal. He was, in general, greatly impressed by the rapid development of the power of Russia, and, in particular, he dreaded a renewal of the alliance between Russia, Austria, and France—an alliance which had so nearly proved fatal to Prussia in the Seven Years' War. How was he to retain the friendship of Russia and at the same time remove from Austria the temptation of flinging herself into the arms of either Russia or France? The problem, says M. Albert Sorel, would have been insoluble 'si la Pologne, pour son malheur, ne s'était trouvée là'.

That Frederick the Great was the first to conceive the idea of a partition of Poland is not the case. Charles XI of Sweden had actually proposed a scheme in 1667; it had been mooted between Peter the Great and Frederick I of Prussia in 1710; Augustus II had suggested it to Frederick William I in 1733. Still, it was Frederick the Great who translated dreams into the terms of political actuality. The one chance for Poland was a radical reform of 'the most miserable constitution that ever enfeebled and demoralized a nation'.[1] A group of Polish patriots led by the Czartoryskis were anxious to initiate reforms—in particular to make the Crown hereditary and to abolish the *liberum veto*. Frederick and Catherine accordingly intervened to perpetuate the prevailing anarchy. In April 1764 a memorable Treaty was concluded between them: they agreed to co-operate in procuring the election to the Polish crown of Stanislas Poniatowski, a Polish nobleman of irresolute character and one of Catherine's discarded lovers; to

[1] Lecky, *History of England*, v. 539.

secure toleration and equal civil rights for the Polish dissidents —a fruitful source of internal weakness; and to veto the constitutional reforms promoted by the Czartoryskis.

Meanwhile, each of the three powerful neighbours had severally assured Poland of their benevolent intentions. In January 1764 Frederick declared that he would 'constantly labour to defend the States of the Republic in their integrity'. Two months later Maria Theresia assured the Poles of her 'resolution to maintain the Republic in all its rights, prerogatives, and possessions', while the Empress Catherine, in May 1764, gave Poland 'a solemn guarantee of all its possessions'. This was at the precise moment when the Russian and Prussian sovereigns were doing their utmost to prevent the patriotic Poles from putting their own house in order. In accordance with the arrangement concluded between them Stanislas Poniatowski was, in August 1764, elected to the throne of Poland, and in 1768 a Diet, elected under the influence of a Russian army of occupation, repealed all existing laws against the dissidents, declared the *liberum veto* and other intolerable abuses to be integral, essential, and irrevocable parts of the Polish Constitution, and placed that Constitution under the guarantee of Russia.

At this critical juncture a little group of patriots made yet another effort to escape from the toils in which their devoted country was being enmeshed. Taking advantage of a recognized constitutional device they met in Podolia, and, encouraged by Austria and France, formed the *Confederation* of Bar. The objects of the confederates were to put an end to Russian domination and to restore the supremacy of Roman Catholicism. This was the point at which Vergennes, in the desperate hope of saving Poland, stirred up the Turks to declare war upon Russia. 'La France', as Sorel puts it, 'essaya de soutenir les confédérés catholiques avec les armes des Musulmans.' The Turkish attack brought disaster upon themselves[1] and did not save Poland. On the contrary, as we have seen, it precipitated partition. Catherine II would

[1] The Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji concluded between Catherine II and the Turks in 1774 was the real beginning of the transference of ascendancy in the Black Sea and the Balkans from Turkey to Russia.

very much have preferred the maintenance of the *status quo* in Poland. Her preoccupation in south-eastern Europe inclined her to listen to the voice of the Prussian tempter.

Austria, too, was on the move. The Empress Maria Theresia was strongly opposed, on grounds alike of policy and morality, to the idea of partition. Nor can it be doubted that she was right. Poland, even in its decrepitude, was an invaluable buffer interposed between the Habsburg and the Russian dominions. It is true that in 1769 Austria, alarmed by the Russo-Turkish war on her frontiers, deemed it prudent to reoccupy the County of Zips which had been mortgaged by Hungary to Poland in 1412, but nevertheless Maria Theresia was perfectly sincere when, in 1771, she protested unalterable friendship for Poland and repudiated the idea of partition.

Early in 1669 Frederick had definitely proposed a partition of Russia, and in 1771 the latter disclosed the project to King Stanislas. The wretched monarch made a desperate but fruitless appeal to France. France, however, could do nothing; Maria Theresia was overborne by her minister Kaunitz and by her son Joseph II, always greedy of territory and then hypnotized by Frederick; and Catherine, despite the advice of some of her wisest counsellors, succumbed to the same malign influence.

Thus, in 1772, the first Partition of Poland was consummated. Austria obtained parts of Galicia and Podolia, the Palatinates of Lemberg and Belz, and half those of Cracow and Sandomierz, with a population of 2,700,000 people and a large revenue. Prussia acquired West Prussia and the Netze district, but was denied the great prize of Danzig and Thorn; Russia's share consisted of Polish Livonia, with the Palatinates of Witebsk and Mstislavl, and parts of those of Polozk and Minsk. Poland lost in all about one-third of her territory, and more than one-third of her subjects. The cessions were formally recognized by a Diet at Grodno in 1773, and in 1775 Poland accepted a revised constitution. The new constitution had some merits, but it retained the two worst features of its predecessor: the *liberum veto* and the elective monarchy.

Two questions seem, at this point, to demand an answer: first, upon whom does the responsibility for this nefarious transaction primarily rest; and second, how was it regarded by contemporaries? The first question may be more conveniently considered in reviewing the completed transaction. As to the second question, it is sometimes affirmed[1] that the transaction was little regarded by contemporaries, and that the moral indignation which it has evoked was the product of a later and more sentimental age. The Annual Register for 1772 exists to refute this assertion. The passages here cited are instinct with the political philosophy of Burke and were almost certainly indited by him:

'The breach that has now been made in those compacts that unite States for their mutual benefit establishes a most dangerous precedent; it deprives, in a great measure, every separate Power in Europe of that security which was founded in treaties, alliances, common interest, and public faith. It seems to throw nations collectively into that state of nature in which it has been supposed that mankind separately at one time subsisted, when the security of the individual depended singly upon his own strength, and no resource was left when it failed.... The present violent dismemberment and partition of Poland without the pretence of war or even the colour of right is to be considered as the first very great breach in the modern political system of Europe....'

But though Burke was quick to apprehend the significance of events in Eastern Europe, neither of the two great Western Powers was in a position, in 1772, to make effectual protest. Still more was this the case when, after the outbreak of the Revolutionary Wars, the work begun in 1772 was continued and completed.

In the interval the Poles made a real effort to put their house, or what remained of it, in order. Nor was the general European situation unfavourable to the attempt. The alliance between Catherine and Frederick came to an end in 1780; in 1786 Frederick himself passed away; and in 1788 Russia found herself involved in two wars: with Turkey on the one hand, with Sweden on the other. The same year witnessed the conclusion, mainly through the diplomacy of

[1] e.g. by Mr. R. Nisbet Bain, *Slavonic Europe*, p. 396.

Pitt, of a triple alliance between England, Prussia, and the United Provinces, directed against the policy of the two Eastern Empires. Poland might have secured the protection of the Triple Alliance, but only on a condition certainly painful to her pride and perhaps injurious to her interests. Prussia, though endowed with West Prussia, had not yet acquired Danzig or Thorn. The price which Poland was now asked to pay for Hohenzollern friendship, carrying with it that of Great Britain, was the cession of these two great Vistula fortresses. The Vistula, as has been said, is Poland, and Poland naturally demurred to the price. Could she have brought herself to pay it, Pitt would have afforded her protection against Russia, while Frederick William II of Prussia promised to secure to her the restoration of Galicia, Austria being indemnified for its loss at the expense of Turkey. Poland, however, preferred Danzig and Thorn to Galicia, and the diplomatic opportunity was allowed to slip, never to return. In 1790 England and Holland refused further support to the somewhat unscrupulous policy of Prussia, and the latter (in the Treaty of Reichenbach) came to terms with the Emperor Joseph II.

Poland, deserted by Prussia, sought salvation in a monarchical revolution. Ever since 1788 a Diet had been in continuous session at Warsaw, engaged on the task of constitutional revision. Nothing had really been effected when in 1791 King Stanislas, yielding to the pressure of the 'Party of Patriots', suddenly propounded a comprehensive scheme of reform. By a stroke of the pen Poland was to be transformed. The Crown was to be made hereditary, and to be advised by a responsible ministry; the Legislature was to be bicameral, and the lower House was to include representatives of the cities; the *liberum veto* and right of *confederation* were to go; the caste system was to disappear; citizens might become nobles and nobles might engage in trade; the condition of the serfs was to be ameliorated, and all citizens were to be equal before the law; Roman Catholicism was to remain the established religion of the State, but there was to be complete toleration for other creeds; the larger towns were to have

municipal self-government, and social and economic reforms were to be taken seriously in hand.

The Diet promptly accepted the proposals of the King, and all except a handful of Deputies took a solemn oath of fidelity to the new Constitution. An English publicist hailed this event as 'a glorious revolution', and proceeded to predict:

'History will one day do justice to that illustrious body [the Diet of 1790], and hold out to posterity, as the perfect model of a most arduous reformation, that revolution which fell to the ground from no want of wisdom on their part, but from the irresistible power and detestable wickedness of their enemies.'[1]

How did those enemies regard the *coup d'état* of King Stanislas? Austria, now under the wise rule of the Emperor Leopold, was cordially and unaffectedly pleased; Frederick William of Prussia, uncertain as to his relations with Russia, thought it prudent to congratulate Poland, and actually concluded a Treaty with Austria involving the acceptance of the new Polish Constitution (July 1791). Catherine, meanwhile, was cudgelling her 'brains to urge the Courts of Vienna and Berlin to busy themselves with the affairs of France' so that she might have her 'own elbows free'. The German Courts played her game for her. Provoked by their inane Declaration of Pillnitz (September 1791) France, in April 1792, declared war, and Catherine's 'elbows were free'.

Internal faction in Poland contributed to the same end. In May 1792 a discontented minority formed the Confederation of Targowica, denounced the new Constitution as the establishment of despotism, and implored the assistance of Russia for the protection of their 'liberties'. In a few weeks Poland was again in the grip of a Russian army, and in January 1793 the Second Partition was consummated. Prussia, admitted to a share of the spoils, obtained the provinces of Great Poland, Posen, Gnesen, and Kalisch, together with the long-coveted districts of Thorn and Danzig—comprising a population of one million and a half. Russia's share in Eastern Poland was,

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, xxxvii, pp. 501–2.

in area, four times as large as that of Prussia, with about twice as many inhabitants. Austria, deeply engaged in the Western war, got nothing. The Polish patriots were impotent to ward off this second blow—a blow even more cynically cruel and much more disastrous than the first. The Diet interposed all the delays of which it was capable, chiefly in the hope of sowing dissension between the partitioners; but all to no purpose, and in September 1793, under pressure from Russia, the Diet at Grodno gave a silent assent to the revocation of the Constitution of 1791 and to the terms of the Second Partition.

The final act in the tragedy was not long delayed. In 1794 the Poles, driven to desperation by the insolent tyranny exercised by the Russian Minister at Warsaw, rose in revolt, proclaimed the famous Kościuszko commander-in-chief, and expelled the Russian garrisons from Cracow, Warsaw, and Wilna successively. But their triumph was short-lived. Prussia, leaving the French to work their will upon the Rhine, concentrated her attention upon Poland; Russia sent a strong force under Suvaroff; Kościuszko and his forces were routed, and in November the Russians entered Warsaw in triumph. Catherine thereupon advanced her frontier to the Bug and the Niemen, leaving Austria and Prussia to quarrel about the rest, though her own disposition was in favour of Austria. Ultimately, Prussia got the provinces subsequently known as South Prussia and New East Prussia, including Warsaw; Austria got Cracow and Western Galicia. Thus the curtain falls upon the last act of the tragedy of Poland. It is comparatively easy to annihilate a State; it is far more difficult to extinguish a nation. 'On a supprimé,' as M. Vimard graphically puts it, 'à la fin du XVIII^e^ siècle, un État de 13 à 14 millions d'habitants, pour avoir cent vingt ans plus tard une nation de 24 millions d'hommes, consciente, unie, un peu en retard sur plusieurs de ses voisines, mais économiquement et intellectuellement en progrès, en croissance numérique rapide, animée d'un patriotisme invincible, d'autant plus profond qu'il se manifeste moins et qu'il est plus combattu, forte de toutes les défaites de ceux qui ont voulu la réduire.'

Of the transactions sketched above widely divergent views have been expressed. The conduct of the partitioning Powers is, with varying degrees of vehemence, generally condemned. But not invariably. If the political philosophy of Treitschke is to be accepted as sound, Poland had forfeited all right to continued existence as an independent Nation-State. History, as he points out, 'shows the continuous growth of great States out of decadent small States. . . . The State is power. . . . Of all political weaknesses that of feebleness is the most abominable and despicable; it is the sin against the Holy Spirit of Politics.' In destroying Poland, then, Frederick the Great and his partners and successors showed an intelligent anticipation of the philosophy of Treitschke and afforded material assistance to the operations of the Holy Spirit. Poland, it must be admitted, was feeble and decadent. There is some plausibility also in the argument that Poland was 'a nuisance as well as a temptation to neighbouring monarchs'.[1] Nor can we wholly ignore the judgement passed by the Prussian historian, von Sybel: 'When one weighs these relative conditions, one can hardly speak of the Polish nation having been overthrown by the Partitions. What fell in 1793 was the inhuman domination of a few noblemen over the Polish people. These only changed their masters, and watched the change which, even upon the Russian side, could not bring them more harm than good with indolent indifference.'[2] To von Sybel's judgement the late Marquess of Salisbury lent the weight of his great authority. In an essay contributed to the *Quarterly Review* in 1863[3] he argued that long before the partitions Poland had ceased to be a nation; that the 'nation' consisted of 150,000 intolerant, incompetent, and narrow-minded slave-owners; that for the mass of the peasantry the partitions resulted only in a change of masters, not wholly for the worse; that Polish anarchy was incurable and contagious; that her neighbours had no alternative except perpetual tutelage or partition; and that, as regards Russia, the parti-

[1] A. Phillips, *Poland*, p. 58.
[2] *History of French Revolution*, Eng. trans., ii. 407.
[3] Republished in 1905 in *Essays* (Foreign Politics). London: John Murray.

tion was no more than a re-conquest of lands which had formerly belonged to her, and that the re-conquest was completely justified by the persecutions inflicted by the dominant Roman Catholics or the 'Dissidents'. 'So far', he concluded, 'as any conquests can be defended, the defence of Catherine appears to us to be complete. The plea of a common religion, which was held to justify conquests in old time; the plea of a common nationality, which in our own days has been deemed an ample apology for the most lavish bloodshed and the most flagrant contempt of treaty; the plea of ancient possession, which has been allowed as at least a good excuse for war in every age; the exigencies of her frontier and the necessity of a counterpoise to the growth of powerful neighbours, which is a principle not wholly unknown to the European diplomacy of the present generation; all these pleas combine to justify the annexation of the provinces which Catherine reconquered from her hereditary foe.'[1] That there is some force in these arguments will hardly be denied; as regards the Russian acquisitions of 1772 they are unanswerable; but in reference to the partitions as a whole it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Lord Salisbury seriously underrated the real strength and persistence—apart from the 'slave-owners'—of Polish nationality, and that he was unduly lenient in his judgement of Catherine II. As for Maria Theresia, no one is inclined to press the case against her too far. She sincerely deplored the transaction into which she was driven by the criminal cupidity of her neighbours. 'Let us', she declared, 'be looked upon rather as weak than as dishonest.' 'With what right', she asked, 'can we rob an innocent Power the defence and support of which has hitherto been our constant boast? I do not understand the policy which allows a third Power, for the mere sake of present convenience and prospective advantage, to imitate the unrighteous action of two sovereigns who have employed their overwhelming might to destroy an innocent neighbour.' But despite her pious protestations she yielded at last. As a cynic has pithily put it: 'Elle pleurait, mais elle prenait.' She had good reason for her tears. Her territorial

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

portion was a large and rich one; but her permanent political interests were not really served by partition. On the contrary, she had reason to deplore the destruction of a State which might still have done something to maintain the balance in Eastern Europe, and in particular to interpose a buffer between the conglomerate empire of the Habsburgs and the rising power of the Hohenzollern. Austria has been at once weakened externally by the destruction of an independent Poland, and distracted internally by the incorporation of a large Slavonic population. But in view of the policy of her neighbours Maria Theresia was helpless: 'I find there is nothing else to be done. I cannot look on quietly at the increase of these two Powers, but still less do I wish to join them.'

Maria Theresia was reluctant; Catherine was gladly acquiescent; the real criminal, it is now generally agreed, was Frederick of Prussia. 'Frederick II was the author of that project,' writes Krasinski.[1] 'C'est le roi de Prusse', said Albert Sorel, 'qui engagea l'opération et la conduisit à son terme.'[2] From these judgements Lord Salisbury would not have dissented. 'To Frederick the Great', he wrote, 'belongs the credit of having initiated the scheme which was actually carried into execution. . . . Frederick had never been troubled by scruples upon the subject of territorial acquisition, and he was not likely to commence them in the case of Poland. Spoliation was the hereditary tradition of his race.' Thus perished the Polish State; the Polish nation still lives; and, almost negligible in the period of relative prosperity, the force of Polish nationality has proved its persistence during a long century of adversity.

III

To this last period brief reference must now be made. After the final dismemberment of Poland a large number of Poles took refuge in France, and a Polish legion was formed to fight under the banner of the Republic. It was naturally hoped that the gratitude of France would take a practical shape.

[1] *The Polish Question and Panslavism*, by Count Valerian Krasinski (London, 1855), p. 69.

[2] *Op. cit.*, i. 69.

Napoleon's advance upon Prussia (1806) roused to a high pitch the expectations of the Poles; when the Emperor actually set foot on Polish soil he was enthusiastically acclaimed as the liberator of the country, and thousands of volunteers flocked to his standard. His own declarations, however, were distinctly evasive and conditional. 'I wish to see if you deserve to be a nation.' Apparently he was only partially convinced, for after the Treaty of Tilsit he offered Polish Prussia to the Tsar Alexander with the title of King. The Tsar was shrewd enough to decline Napoleon's offer, and consequently the whole of the territory acquired by Prussia in the second and third Partitions was erected into the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw and conferred upon Napoleon's faithful henchman, the King of Saxony. Two years later Western Galicia, snatched from Austria, was thrown into the Grand-Duchy. The Grand-Duchy of Warsaw forms but an episode in the history of Poland, but it is not a wholly insignificant one. Many of the principles of the French Revolution were temporarily transmitted into the Napoleonic Duchy: serfdom was abolished; judicial procedure was reformed; the Code Napoléon became the basis of Polish law; elementary schools were established; the equality of all citizens before the law was proclaimed; and some real measure of authority was confided to the Diet of Warsaw, to which representations of the Commons were admitted. Above all, the Polish army was reorganized and re-equipped. To Napoleon's 'grand army', collected for the invasion of Russia, Poland contributed 80,000 men, and earnestly petitioned the Emperor for a restoration of the Kingdom. It is now generally admitted that in refusing the petition Napoleon committed a serious blunder. If instead of advancing upon Moscow he had halted at Smolensko, and had reconstituted the ancient Kingdom of the Poles, he might have saved the Grand Army and paralysed the opposition of Russia. There might then have been no war of German liberation, no Leipzig, perhaps no Waterloo. But Napoleon had so far forgotten the catch-words of his youth that he could no longer pay even lip-homage to the principle of nationality.

To this principle Alexander inclined a more sympathetic ear, particularly when his ear was attuned by his confidant, Prince Adam Czartoryski. The idea of Polish nationality was by no means an unfamiliar one to the Tsar. He had indeed announced a definite resolution on the subject as far back as 1812. It ran as follows:

'I hereby declare before heaven and earth, that I will rebuild and restore the kingdom of Poland; and calling forth the aid of Almighty God, I put on my head the Polish Crown, a separate crown, but through my person connected with the Russian Empire, and I accept it for myself and for my successors, and, finally, I endorse the Constitution of May 3, 1791, in principle, as a Polish fundamental law in respect of organization, form of government, and administration of laws, and on that basis I will rule, govern, and co-operate with you to secure and establish your happiness.'[1]

Alexander, therefore, came to the Congress of Vienna fully resolved upon a restoration of the kingdom of Poland. The difficulties in his path were by no means negligible. Prussia had no mind to surrender the provinces assigned to her in the second and third Partitions. Yet the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw now belonged to Russia by right of conquest. Ultimately Prussia was permitted to retain the provinces of Posen and Gnesen together with Thorn and Danzig, not to speak of large compensations in central and western Germany. Austria retained Galicia; Cracow was constituted, and until 1846 remained, an independent republic under the guarantee of the Powers; the rest of the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw passed to the Tsar as King of Poland.

These arrangements were far from satisfactory to the Western Powers. Lord Castlereagh in particular strove earnestly but in vain to secure a restoration of Polish independence:[2] failing that, he pleaded for the largest possible measure of autonomy.

'Since', he wrote, 'the restoration of an independent kingdom of Poland appears to be impossible, it is greatly to be desired that tranquillity should be re-established in all the parts of

[1] First published in the *Wieczernie Wremia* for September 3, 1916.

[2] 'Lord Castlereagh was virtually left alone to maintain the contest for Poland, and with it for European independence.'—ALISON, *Life*, ii. 513.

ancient Poland on firm, liberal principles favourable to the general welfare by means of a conciliatory administration adapted to the spirit of the nation; and as experience has proved the complete uselessness of all the attempts that have been made to make the Poles forget their nationality and even their language by introducing foreign institutions repugnant to their manners and ideas, it is much to be desired that the three Powers should before leaving Vienna mutually pledge themselves to treat the parts of Poland under their dominion . . . as *Poles*.'

Lord Castlereagh so far prevailed that the first article of the *Final Act* of the Congress ran as follows:

'The Duchy of Warsaw . . . shall be irrevocably attached to [the Russian Empire] . . : in perpetuity. His Imperial Majesty [of Russia] reserves to himself to give to this State, enjoying a distinct administration, the interior improvement which he shall judge proper. . . .

'The Poles who are respective subjects of Russia, Austria, and Prussia shall obtain a Representation and National Institution regulated according to the degree of political consideration that each of the Governments to which they belong shall judge expedient and proper to grant them.'

To the 'Congress Kingdom', as distinct from Lithuania and Russian Poland, large concessions, modelled upon the French Charter of 1814, were accordingly granted by the Tsar: a bicameral legislature; a Senate consisting of Nobles and Bishops selected by the Crown, and an elected Chamber of Deputies; biennial Parliaments; a 'responsible' ministry; a separate budget; liberty of person and of the press; a national army under the national flag; municipal self-government for the towns, and the use of the Polish language for official purposes. On paper the guarantees for the recognition of a separate Polish nationality were ample, and that the Tsar genuinely meant to observe them is unquestionable. The Vice-royalty and the command of the army were offered to Kościuszko, leader of the insurrection of 1794, and, on his refusal, the former office was conferred upon General Zajaczek, a native Pole who had served under Napoleon, while the command of the army was given to the Tsar's brother the Grand Duke Constantine.

Three years later (1818) the Tsar presided in person at the

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opening of the First Diet, and earnestly exhorted his new subjects to 'prove to contemporary kings that the liberal institutions which they associated with doctrines threatening the entire social system with a frightful catastrophe were not a dangerous illusion'.[1] Unhappily, the exhortation was ignored, and no inference favourable to liberal institutions could be drawn from the history of the Congress Kingdom. The aristocratic oligarchy seemed bent only upon proving that, like the restored Bourbons, they had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing during times of adversity. The natural leaders of the people were mutually suspicious and agreed only in factious opposition to the sovereign. Consequently the Second Diet (1820) was compelled to acquiesce in severe curtailment of liberty, and the reign of Alexander closed (1825) in gloom, disappointment, and disillusion.

His brother and successor Nicholas was a man of very different temper. Much less 'Western' in outlook than Alexander; shrewd but uncultured; utterly devoid of any leanings towards liberalism or nationalism, a man of magnificent physique, of strong character, and, above all, Russian to the core.

His Polish kingdom, despite exceptional economic prosperity, was seething with discontent. With very little encouragement discontent would blaze out into insurrection. The July Revolution in Paris (1830) sufficed for the purpose, and towards the end of November revolution broke out in Warsaw. The Tsar Nicholas promptly sent into Poland a Russian force of over 110,000 men under Marshal Diebitsch, who had lately brought the Turks to their knees. Diebitsch was less successful in Poland; the Poles, who had a well-trained army of 60,000 men, fought with magnificent courage and for a time with conspicuous success. But in council they showed themselves incapable of eradicating the faults and weaknesses which had been their undoing in the past: suspicion, jealousy, faction; and the insurrection ultimately collapsed. Prussia had carefully guarded Russia's northern flank, and Lord Palmerston had been too much concerned with

[1] Skrine, *Expansion of Russia*, p. 65.

Belgium to interfere in Poland. The collapse of the revolution was followed by a policy of russification. The Congress Kingdom became a Russian province; the constitution of 1815 was replaced by an Organic Statute; the Polish army was suppressed; the Universities of Warsaw and Wilna were abolished, and the official use of the Polish language was prohibited.

For twenty-five years the system of repression was consistently and, to all appearances, successfully pursued. The reign of the Emperor Nicholas was, in the phrase of a competent English critic, 'one long conspiracy on the part of a monarch to denationalize a people'.[1] The accession of Alexander II brought some amelioration in the lot of this unhappy people. The pressure of religious persecution was sensibly relaxed; the Universities were re-established; a considerable measure of autonomy was restored; above all, the serfs were emancipated. But the Poles displayed no gratitude towards the liberator. According to some critics they owed none: the serfs were emancipated, it is argued, simply to establish a counterpoise against the separatist tendencies of the Polish nobility. Be that as it may, the fact remains that these healing measures failed to heal, and that in 1863 the embers of discontent, never really extinguished, again burst into flame. The insurrection of that year was ill-advised, inopportune, and from the outset hopeless. It served to set back a movement towards reform which, thanks to the concord between the Marquis Vielopolski and the new Tsar Alexander II, might ultimately have achieved considerable success; it deprived Poland of her recently recovered autonomy; it sent thousands of her noblest sons into exile; it afforded the Tsar an excuse for complete russification; above all, it gave Bismarck the chance of demonstrating afresh the insidious and calculated friendship of Prussia for Russia. As a consequence, Russia was still further enmeshed in the toils of the Prussian alliance, and Bismarck, relying upon the friendly neutrality of Russia, could play with the completer confidence the clever but hazardous game which, by the three stages of

[1] Day, *Russian Government in Poland.*

1864, 1866, and 1870, at last led to the attainment of German unity. Bismarck's friendship gave Russia the opportunity of denouncing in 1870 the Black Sea Clauses of the Treaty of Paris, but otherwise Russia paid dearly for Prussian assistance. A discontented Poland has deflected Russia from her natural policy, alienated her natural friends, and subordinated her interests to those of Berlin.

Since 1863 Russia has had another chance in Poland, but she has utterly failed to conciliate her Polish subjects: she has placed every obstacle in the way of their advancement, intellectual or economic; she has fettered their industries and neglected to provide for the most elementary needs of modern civilization; she has cramped their education and persecuted their religion. Yet despite every discouragement the economic development of the country during the last hundred years has been remarkable. The Polish peasant-proprietors are among the most progressive agriculturists in Europe; they have adopted co-operative methods similar to those which have met with marked success in Denmark and Ireland; they have established credit-banks; they have promoted, not perhaps without ulterior motives, every form of economic association. Even more marked has been the progress of industry. Warsaw, in the course of a century, has increased in population from 40,000 (1815) to 800,000 (1915); Lodz, which in 1792 was a village with less than 200 inhabitants, is now a town of over 500,000. But capital is still mainly in the hands of the Jews, and the Poles themselves, though not averse from industrial life, are lacking in initiative and capacity for direction and management. Perhaps on this account they have the more energy for political agitation. Never since 1815 has there been any prolonged abstention from it. The national spirit is invincible.

Only in Austrian Poland has there been any approach to contentment, and then only in the last half-century. Between the 'restoration' of 1815 and the revolution of 1848 Metternich's rule was as harsh and repressive in Poland as elsewhere. The annihilation of the republican independence of

Cracow (1846) and its absorption into Galicia, was at once a breach of faith and an affront to Polish sentiment. But since 1876 there has been a marked change for the better in the administration of Austrian Poland. The Poles under Habsburg rule have enjoyed virtual autonomy under their own elected Diet; the administration and the schools are alike 'native', the people are free to use their own language and to worship according to their own faith, which is also, be it noted, the faith of their rulers. Small wonder, therefore, if the Poles of Russia showed tepid zeal in a fight against Austria.

Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that despite the relative rigour of Russian rule, despite the lenity of Habsburg methods, the Galician Poles would have gladly embraced the opportunity of re-union with the Russian Poles in an autonomous Poland under the suzerainty of the Tsar. Still more cordially, of course, will they welcome re-union if it can be achieved in conjunction with complete independence.

The position of the Prussian Poles presents, both politically and geographically, a much more complex problem, the consideration of which must be deferred to the next chapter.

Meanwhile, as to the attitude of the Allies towards the Polish problem as a whole there has been and there is no ambiguity. The relations between France and the undivided Poland were continuously cordial and close. If France could have averted the destruction of Polish independence in the eighteenth century she would have done so. England, through Castlereagh, did her utmost to secure the restoration of Polish independence in 1815. Nothing could have contributed more effectually to the emancipation of Russian diplomacy, under the old régime, from its thraldom to Potsdam, than a pacified Poland. 'La Pologne a été', as M. Leroy-Beaulieu insists, 'pendant plus d'un siècle, le lien, ou mieux la chaîne, qui, malgré de réciproques antipathies nationales, a tenu la politique russe unie et comme rivée à la politique prussienne. La Russie ne recouvrera la pleine liberté de sa politique que le jour où elle saura briser cette chaîne en se conciliant ses sujets de la Vistule, en faisant de

ces provinces polonaises, aujourd'hui pour elle une cause de faiblesse et dépendance vis-à-vis de la Prusse, une force et un rempart en face de l'Allemagne et du pangermanisme, qui se souviennent encore que, avant Jéna et Tilsitt, le Prussien régnait à Varsovie.'[1]

Nowhere was the proclamation of the Grand Duke Nicholas more enthusiastically applauded than in England and France. It was, in the graphic words of M. Hanotaux, statesman and historian, an awakening from nightmare. 'A nightmare oppressed Europe: a nation cut to pieces, panting, living, and at the same time dead, under the knife of the oppressors. All just men, all oppressed peoples turned their eyes towards Poland, the eldest of all martyrs.'[2] 'Poland', said M. Clémenceau, 'shall live again.' So long as the old régime subsisted in Russia there was, naturally, some reticence among the Tsar's allies as to the precise mode of Russia's resurrection. England and France could but italicize the terms of the proclamations issued by the Russian government and hope that the most generous interpretation would ultimately be given to them. Western Europe, and France in particular, always regarded Poland as an outpost of European civilization; as an antidote to the more primitive culture alike of Prussian and Muscovite. A strong and independent Poland, could strength have been achieved and independence maintained, would, as Lord Castlereagh so clearly perceived, have been the most effective barrier between the Teutonic and the Slav Empires, and would therefore have offered a reliable guarantee for the maintenance of peace in Europe. Its utility, in this respect, is not exhausted. Talleyrand's dictum is as true to-day as when he first uttered it, a century ago, 'La question la plus exclusivement européenne est celle qui concerne la Pologne.'

[1] Ap. Dmowski, *op. cit.*, p. vii. [2] *Le Figaro*, August 16, 1914.

CHAPTER X

THE PROBLEM OF POLAND. II[1]

PRUSSIA, POLAND, AND IRELAND

'There would perhaps have been no world-war to-day if independent Poland had remained a Baltic Power possessed of a fleet in the Gulf of Dantzig and of a country traversed by a network of strategic railways.'—E. J. DILLON.

THE last chapter was devoted to a discussion of one aspect of the Polish problem. Since the words were written that elusive problem has entered upon a new phase. So much, but only so much, is certain. It is possible to exaggerate the significance of recent events; it is equally possible to minimize it; but to ignore it would be something worse than affectation.

On November 5, 1916, General von Beseler, the German Governor of Warsaw, issued a proclamation which may possibly prove to be historic. Professedly, it announced to the Poles the re-establishment of Poland as an independent State, and the guarantee of a Constitution under an hereditary monarchy. The terms of the proclamation were as follows:

'To the inhabitants of the Government of Warsaw.—His Majesty the German Emperor and His Majesty the Austrian Emperor and Apostolic King of Hungary, sustained by their firm confidence in the final victory of their arms, and guided by the wish to lead to a happy future the Polish districts which by their brave armies were snatched with heavy sacrifices from Russian power, have agreed to form from these districts an independent State with an hereditary Monarchy and a Constitution. The more precise regulation of the frontiers of the Kingdom of Poland remains reserved.

'In union with both the Allied Powers the new Kingdom will find the guarantees which it desires for the free develop-

[1] Published in the *Edinburgh Review* for January 1917.

ment of its strength. In its own Army the glorious traditions of the Polish Army of former times and the memory of our brave Polish fellow-combatants in the great War of the present time will continue to live. Its organization, training, and command will be regulated by mutual agreement. The Allied Monarchs confidently hope that their wishes for the State and national development of the Kingdom of Poland will now be fulfilled with the necessary regard to the general political conditions of Europe and to the welfare and security of their own countries and peoples.

'The great western neighbours of the Kingdom of Poland will see with pleasure arise again and flourish at their eastern frontier a free and happy State rejoicing in its national life.

'By order of His Majesty the German Emperor,

'VON BESELER, Governor-General.'

A proclamation in similar terms was on the same day issued at Lublin by the Austro-Hungarian Governor. Simultaneously the late Emperor Francis Joseph made a further announcement in reference to a fresh concession to his Polish subjects in Galicia. After referring in sympathetic terms to the 'many proofs of devotion and loyalty' which during his reign he had received from Galicia, and to the 'great and heavy sacrifices which this province, exposed in the present War to a fierce enemy assault' had had 'to bear in the interests of the eastern frontiers of the Empire', the late Emperor proceeded as follows:

'It is therefore my will, at the moment when the new State comes into existence and coincident with this development, to grant Galicia also the right to manage independently its own internal affairs in as full a measure as this can be done in accordance with its membership of the State as a whole and with the latter's prosperity, and thereby give the population of Galicia a guarantee for its racial and economic development.'[1]

It may be said at once that taken by itself there would be nothing in the proclamation of the Austrian Emperor to excite surprise or suspicion. On the whole, the record of Austria in regard to the treatment of its Polish subjects is or was much cleaner than that of the other partitioning Powers. This fact is admitted, and indeed emphasized, by Dr. Friedrich

[1] *The Times*, November 6, 1916.

Naumann in his recently published *Mitteleuropa*. 'We may', he writes, 'state frankly that, however imperfect are the results of handling nationalities in Austria and Hungary, there is, nevertheless, much more real understanding there of this type of problem than with us.'[1] Hence, if it had not been for the sinister conjunction of the proclamation of General von Beseler at Warsaw, the words of the Emperor Francis Joseph might have brought a real ray of hope to the Galician Poles. It is not, however, with Austrian policy in Poland that this chapter in concerned.

The German proclamation wears, by general consent, a very different aspect. It has been assumed in this country and elsewhere that it must be interpreted as one of the many signals of distress which the Central Empires have lately put out; that it indicates an exhaustion of the available man power in Germany; a desire to regularize the raising of a large force of Poles, and to induce the Polish recruits to embrace with ardour the cause in which they will be called to fight. That such considerations have weighed heavily with the statesmen of the Wilhelmstrasse is beyond dispute; it may even be that no other motives have inspired this latest move in the development of Prussian policy in Poland; but there is a possibility that reasons rather less obvious than those which have been generally assigned to the German Emperor and his advisers have been operating; and there is a further possibility that the Poles, careless as to the motives which have inspired the offer, may deem it prudent to close with it, and to extract what satisfaction they can from a situation which no broken pledges or disappointed hopes could render much more distressing than that with which they are now confronted.

The proclamation issued on November 5 by order of the German Emperor was addressed, it will be observed, to the 'inhabitants of the Government of Warsaw'—the centre of the Polish districts which had been 'snatched from Russian power'; it is those districts which are to be 'formed into an independent State', and the 'more precise regulation of the frontiers of the Kingdom of Poland' is specifically and

[1] *Central Europe*, p. 79.

ominously reserved.[1] All this may be deemed to be confirmatory of the interpretation commonly placed upon the matter in countries outside the Central Empires. Nevertheless, no critic who is at once candid and informed can ignore the fact that, quite apart from a desire to conciliate the newly-conquered Congress Kingdom of Poland, apart from anxiety to recruit her exhausted armies, Prussia has at least one strong reason for a new departure in her Polish policy. That reason is to be found in the disastrous failure of the policy hitherto pursued in Poland. For the last forty-five years Prussia has been administering to her Poles successive doses of coercion, each dose appreciably stronger than the previous one. Each and all have failed either to cure or kill the patient. The Prussian Poles are no more 'Germanized' to-day than when Bismarck embarked upon the policy of intimidation in 1872. No one could be more candid in admitting or deploring this characteristic failure than the influential publicist already quoted. 'Prussia', writes Dr. Naumann, 'took compulsion in one hand and material prosperity in the other, and demanded mental adhesion in exchange. She brought about much material good, but discovered no way to the heart of the Polish people.... The German schools have made them useful and industrially capable bilinguists but not Germans. A Pole remains a Pole, very often even when he goes to live in Berlin or Westphalia. Even as a travelling workman he retains his national character and dreams of other things than the German inspectors who allot him his work.'[2]

Candid critics are at least as numerous in England as in Germany; and among them there are those who have consistently maintained that the treatment of the Poles by Prussia finds a close parallel in English policy in Ireland, and that it is not for England to cast a stone at Prussia. It is super-

[1] Between the time (December 1916) when these words were originally written and the time (January 1917) when they were published, the Tsar Nicholas in an Imperial Order of the Day specifically and solemnly pledged himself to the 'Creation of a free Poland from all the three at present dismembered Provinces'. The Western Allies also plighted afresh their troth to Poland.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 79–80.

fluous to add that every effort is made by German publicists to disseminate this reading of political history,[1] and that, in consequence, the doctrine that Ireland is England's Poland is widely accepted in Germany.

No words written in this country are likely to reach German readers to-day; much less to carry any weight, if they should reach them. But, for the sake of English readers whose consciences may be troubled, it seems worth while to inquire, with such dispassionateness as circumstances permit, how far the suggested parallel can be sustained. To push home that inquiry is the purpose of the pages that follow.

Geographical conditions seem to suggest a preliminary parallel. The temptation to the annexation of West Prussia after the union of the Duchy of East Prussia with the Electorate of Brandenburg was, we may admit, irresistible. Equally certain was it that the Norman adventurers, having conquered England, would, in course of time, attempt the conquest of the isolated island to the west. But between William the Bastard's conquest of England in the eleventh century and Henry the Second's conquest of Ireland in the twelfth there was a striking contrast. The Norman Conquest of England was a 'clean job', and was accomplished in four years. The so-called 'conquest' of Ireland was to the last degree superficial and incomplete, and was imperfectly accomplished at the end of four hundred years. The reasons for the divergence have never been more brilliantly analysed than by Sir John Davies, Attorney-General for Ireland in the reign of James I, and to his illuminating book any curious reader may be referred. A couple of sentences, which go to the root of the matter, must here suffice for quotation:

'The first attempt to conquer this Kingdom was but an adventure of a few private gentlemen. . . . We cannot conjecture this army to have been so great as might suffice to conquer all Ireland being divided into so many principalities and having so many Hydra's heads as it had at that time. For a barbarous country is not so easily conquered as a civil, whereof Caesar had experience in the wars against the Gauls.

[1] Cf., for instance, *England und Irland*, by Carl Peters, Hamburg, 1915.

A country possessed with many petty Lords and States, is not so soon brought under as an entire Kingdom governed by one Prince or Monarch.'[1]

In brief, Ireland was not yet enough of a unity, either social or political, to be susceptible of rapid or complete conquest. The premature attempt proved equally disastrous to the semi-conquerors and to the semi-conquered people. The result was the establishment on the east coast of Ireland of an Anglo-Norman settlement known as the 'Pale'; a settlement which in Mr. Lecky's fine imagery 'acted like a running sore, constantly irritating the Celtic regions beyond the Pale and deepening the confusion which prevailed there'. Had the attempted conquest been deferred for two or three centuries the Irish tribes would almost certainly have evolved some semblance of political unity. The planting of a fragment of feudal England on the other side of St. George's Channel served only to arrest spontaneous internal development. The Anglo-Normans were never in sufficient force to conquer the whole island; the Irish tribesmen were too disunited to expel the Anglo-Normans. A hopeless situation was consequently stereotyped. The Anglo-Normans found Ireland in the tribal stage in the twelfth century; in that stage it remained in the seventeenth. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the 'Pale' maintained a precarious and ever-diminishing hold upon Ireland: partly in consequence of lack of adequate support from England; partly by reason of the assimilation of the 'colonists' to the native tribesmen, an assimilation so complete that the colonists became, in proverbial phrase, *Hibernicis ipsis Hiberniores*. By the end of the fifteenth century the Pale was almost extinct.

The Tudors consequently had to confront a difficult problem. The support given to the Yorkist pretenders in Ireland compelled the reluctant attention of Henry VII; Sir Edward Poynings was sent over as Deputy; and the Statute known by his name, which was passed in the Parliament of Drogheda, for the first time defined the constitutional relations of the two countries. The Parliament of Ireland became in 1494, and

[1] *Discoverie of the true causes why Ireland was never conquered.*

until 1782 remained, entirely dependent upon the English Privy Council. Henry VIII made a characteristically vigorous attempt to anglicize Ireland, and might perhaps have succeeded but for the fatal blunder of attempting to force an essentially 'Anglican' Reformation upon an unprepared and intensely Catholic Ireland. Few if any of the native Irish were converted to Protestantism; little attempt was made to convert them; but the 'Reformation' Statutes passed in the English Parliament were re-enacted in Ireland, and Anglicanism became the State religion of Ireland as of England.[1] From that day onwards the English rulers of Ireland were confronted with an ecclesiastical problem.

Upon the ecclesiastical problem there soon supervened an agrarian problem. Throughout a great part of the reign of Elizabeth Ireland was in a state of rebellion. Those rebellions were due in part to the intrigues of the Catholic Powers of the Continent; in part to the ecclesiastical unrest in Ireland; but chiefly to the fear of the Irish tribesmen that they were to be driven from the soil they loved. The fears, though exaggerated, were not wholly groundless, for the 'plantation' of Ireland had now become a fixed policy with English statesmen. Not until the very end of Elizabeth's reign were the rebellions stamped out, and by that time Ireland, as we learn from the terrible description of Edmund Spenser, was literally a desert.[2]

To this desert the Stuarts succeeded. The reign of James I was memorable for the plantation of Ulster with English and, still more predominantly, with Scottish colonists. Thence sprang the Ulster problem, which still baffles British statesmanship. The reign of Charles I is associated in Irish memories mainly with the name of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford. Strafford was, in many respects, the type of ruler whom the Ireland of the seventeenth century sorely needed: energetic, firm, and essentially enlightened. He repressed aristocratic disorder; he did much for the Church

[1] For Tudor policy in Ireland cf. Richey, *Short History of the Irish People*; and Bagwell, *Ireland under the Tudors*—both admirable.
[2] Cf. Spenser, *View of the State of Ireland* (1596).

and for education ; he gave an immense impulse to the material prosperity of the island ; but the 'rule of Thorough' was hateful to the most powerful classes in Ireland ; the great lords hounded Strafford to his death ; and six months later the Catholics of the North rose in rebellion and massacred every Protestant within their reach.

For that massacre the English Puritans demanded vengeance ; and terrible vengeance was ultimately exacted by Cromwell. But Cromwell was no mere avenger of blood : he carried to a logical conclusion the policy of 'plantation' ; he abolished the Irish Parliament ; he gave to the Irish constituencies representation at Westminster ; he admitted Ireland to full partnership in England's trade. His reforms ended with the Commonwealth. The Restoration gave a new turn to the wheel of Ireland's fortune ; Cromwell's policy was upset, having had no real chance to demonstrate either its failure or its success, and after the Revolution of 1688 Ireland had to be again reconquered.

The Treaty of Limerick ushered in the worst period of Anglo-Irish relations. Whig policy in Ireland rested upon a triple foundation : political ascendancy, commercial exclusiveness, and the rigid proscription of the Irish Catholics. The assertion (by the declaratory Act of 6 George I) of the right of the Parliament of Great Britain to legislate for Ireland deprived the Irish Parliament of such remnants of independence as had been left it by Poynings' Law. The generous commercial policy of Cromwell was reversed, and, by a series of protective measures passed in the interests of English manufacturers and English agriculturists, Ireland was excluded from the English market and deprived of the right to compete with England in neutral markets. By this means the incipient prosperity of Ireland, noticeable in the seventeenth century, suffered a rude check in the eighteenth, and was never again manifested until Ireland was economically re-made by Sir Horace Plunkett. The cruel proscription to which, in the eighteenth century, the vast majority of the Irish people were subjected under the provisions of the Penal Code is notorious. Burke's fervid denunciation of that code contains no exaggeration.

'I must', he wrote, 'do it justice; it was a complete system, full of coherence and consistency, well digested and well composed in all its parts. It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.'

To capture the three strongholds of Whig policy, the new Irish Party, led by Flood, Grattan, and Charlemont, was formed. Thanks to the defeat of England in the war of American secession; thanks to the enrolment of a large force of Protestant volunteers in Ireland; and thanks, not least, to the eloquence of Flood and Grattan, remarkable success attended the agitation, and by 1782 a large part of the programme of the new Irish Party had been triumphantly carried out.

But not the whole of it. The movement affected mainly the Anglo-Irish colony. It hardly touched Celtic Ireland. By the legislation of 1780 Ireland got a considerable instalment of commercial freedom; by that of 1782–3 the chief restrictions upon the independence of the Irish Parliament were removed. The Parliament of Great Britain renounced its right to legislate for Ireland, and the Irish Parliament repealed Poynings' Law. Two of the stumbling-blocks were thus removed; but the third—the political proscription of the Irish Catholics—still remained to trouble Grattan's Parliament.

The experiment of legislative independence lasted from 1782 to 1800. It was very far from being a success. Perhaps the conditions under which it was tried precluded the possibility. The failure to settle the Catholic question; the suspicions aroused by Pitt's honourable and courageous effort to give Ireland complete commercial equality with England; the hopes aroused by the appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam and the dismay caused by his sudden recall; the excitement engendered by contemporary events in France; the treasonable negotiations of the 'United Irishmen' with the French Republic; the repeated attempts on the part of the French Directory to land troops in Ireland and to sustain an Irish

rebellion against England; the outbreak and collapse of the rebellion; the measures taken to stamp out its embers: all these things would have rendered the success of Grattan's experiment exceedingly dubious even had the constitution which goes by his name been a monument of political wisdom and ingenuity. As a fact, it was precisely the reverse. It could hardly have lived in a calm sea; in the storms which it encountered it was certain to founder. The technical shortcomings of the constitutional experiment initiated in 1782 have been well summarized by the late Lord Chancellor Ball:

'Under the constitution of 1782 there was no provision for the case of disagreement in policy between the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland. They were equal and co-ordinate, without any paramount authority being provided to overrule or reconcile them. . . . The two Parliaments might adopt different views as to commerce, foreign policy, treaties, and other relations with foreign powers. The controversies likely to arise in connexion with these subjects and the injurious consequences to be apprehended from them were very clearly foreseen by the Duke of Portland in 1782, and he proposed to retain for Great Britain a supreme control in matters of the most importance. . . . Nothing, however, could have been less in accordance with the views and aims of the Irish patriotic party than suggestions of this character.'

In this summary one important point is, however, omitted: the position of the Irish Executive. The Executive continued to be practically vested in the hands of the Lord-Lieutenant, his Chief Secretary, and the Lord Chancellor, and these officials took their orders not from the Irish Parliament but from the English Cabinet by whose chief they were appointed. This constitutional flaw would probably have proved fatal to the success of the Grattan experiment, even had circumstances been far more propitious than in fact they were.

The admitted failure of the constitutional experiment in Ireland, coinciding as it did with a serious crisis in the external relations of Great Britain, drove Pitt to the expedient of a legislative union. That union was at first bitterly opposed by a large section of the Irish people; but the owners of the boroughs which were deprived of representation were generously compensated; the Catholics were induced to

acquiesce by a promise of complete emancipation; and the industrial community received a *quid pro quo* in the removal of all restrictions upon Irish trade. The Protestants were the most difficult party to deal with, but they could not ignore the argument that Union afforded the only chance of preserving the Church of the ascendancy party. Many of the transactions incidental to the Union have an unsavoury flavour; but the charges of 'force and fraud' levelled against Pitt have been grossly exaggerated, and so stout a Home Ruler as Mr. (now Lord) Bryce was fain to admit that substantial arguments could be adduced in favour of the Union.[1]

By itself, however, the Union was a *torso*. Its only chance of success lay, as Pitt perceived, in a prompt acknowledgement of the Catholic claims, and in passing a comprehensive measure for dealing with the grievance of tithes. The prejudices of a half-insane monarch defeated the benevolent wisdom of the minister, and Pitt, amid the wreck of his Irish policy, resigned office.

Twenty-nine years later, Daniel O'Connell extorted from the fears of Peel and Wellington what Pitt would have conceded to the claims of justice. Spontaneously offered in 1800, Catholic Emancipation, especially if accompanied by concurrent endowment, might have added a union of hearts to the union of Parliaments. Conceded as a preferable alternative to civil war, after thirty years of suicidal procrastination, the healing measure could not heal. Such ameliorative properties as it might still have possessed were dissipated by the concomitant legislation. The Emancipation Act was immediately followed by an Act disfranchising about 174,000 county electors out of a total of 200,000. These 40*s*. freeholders, created by the landlords for their own purposes, could no longer be trusted to vote in accordance with instructions.

Then nature came to the assistance of the English legislature. Population, artificially stimulated by landlords, by priests, and by potatoes, at last justified Malthus by outstripping the means of subsistence. A considerable proportion of the over-

[1] Cf. *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. xxv.

grown Irish population had long been on the verge of starvation; it succumbed to the disaster of 1846.

The Great Famine is the most important single event in the economic and social annals of modern Ireland. Its significance may, however, be summarized in a sentence. When George III ascended the throne there were about two and a half million people in Ireland; at Queen Victoria's accession there were eight millions; at her death there were four and a half. Of the eight millions living in 1846, four, it is estimated, depended for subsistence upon Raleigh's 'lazy root'. The root suddenly gave out. Between 1846 and 1851 over a million people emigrated from Ireland, and nearly a million, despite the utmost efforts of the government and people of Great Britain, died at home. A further million emigrated in the decade 1851 and 1861. The emigration conferred a twofold benefit upon Ireland. It relieved hopeless congestion and it succoured those who remained. It is estimated that in the seventeen years following the famine £13,000,000 was sent home from the United States. But the famine affected not only the peasants but the landlords of Ireland. Fully one-third of the landlords were hopelessly ruined, with nothing before them but the cold comfort of the Encumbered Estates Court. This court, set up in 1849, initiated an agrarian revolution, the final stages of which were reached in the Land Purchase Acts associated with the names of Ashbourne and Wyndham.

This agrarian revolution is not only of great intrinsic significance; it affords also a striking contrast to the agrarian policy pursued by Prussia in Poland. On both grounds it demands something more than a passing reference.

Celtic Ireland had never been really feudalized. The tribal system survived, as we have seen, well into the seventeenth century, and was only broken up by the plantation policy of the early Stuarts and Cromwell. The new 'proprietors' were mostly Protestants; but, contrary to intention, the native tribal owners, Catholics to a man, remained upon the soil as 'tenants'. These tenants continued to cherish the tradition that they were at least part-owners of the soil they tilled; and the growth of a tenant-right custom, notably in Ulster, encouraged the idea.

The change in the proprietorship of the land, necessitated by the ruin of the old landlords, and facilitated by the Encumbered Estates Act, embittered the relations between tenants and landlords; for the latter were 'new men' who had purchased the land on a commercial basis for commercial purposes.

Agrarian discontent was intensified by the Repeal movement initiated by O'Connell; by the agitation against tithes, and not least by the fiasco of the 'Young Ireland' rebellion in 1848. Sir Robert Peel had recognized the urgency of the land question when he came into power in 1841, and had appointed a strong Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Devon to 'inquire into the Law and Practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland'. The Devon Commission reported in 1845, and a bill was introduced to give the tenant compensation for unexhausted improvements. But it met with strong opposition, and before it could be reintroduced with promised amendments the Peel ministry fell. Not until 1860 did an English ministry find time to return to a question which was in reality the core of the Irish problem. In that year Mr. Cardwell, one of the most capable of Peel's disciples, attempted to apply Free Trade principles to Irish land tenure. The Act, though well intentioned, was a dead failure. In 1870 Mr. Gladstone passed an Act which was intended to put a stop to capricious evictions; to give the force of law to the Ulster custom of tenant-right wherever such custom was recognizable; to secure to an outgoing tenant compensation for unexhausted improvements; and to facilitate the purchase of holdings by cultivators. The last object was dear to the heart of Mr. Bright, who knew much more about the Irish land-system than his chief, and the clauses intended to effect it were known by his name. The purchase scheme was, however, clogged with conditions so complicated as to render it practically inoperative, and the Act, as a whole, did little to solve the land-problem. Then came the period in Ireland, as in England, of agricultural depression. Tenants got into arrears with their rents; evictions took place on a large scale; Parnell launched the Land League; outrages multiplied, and in 1881 Gladstone again tried his hand

at the land question. The Act of that year was based upon the 'three F's'—free sale, fixity of tenure, and fair rents to be determined by a land court. It was drafted in defiance of the best Irish opinion, and attempted to do the right thing in the wrong way. Lord Morley of Blackburn described it as 'a charter of liberation' for the Irish peasant. As a fact, the principle of dual ownership which the Act of 1881 was intended to sanctify and perpetuate was fundamentally unsound, and until that principle was frankly abandoned no real progress towards a solution of the problem could be made.

The Unionist party, on coming into office in 1885, immediately adopted the principle of land-purchase; and Lord Ashbourne's Act, enlarged and elaborated by the Acts of 1888 and 1891, has gone far to transfer the ownership of the soil of Ireland from big landlords to cultivating owners. Not less than two-thirds of the Irish tenant farmers are now, or will shortly become, the owners of the soil they till. At last, therefore, the most difficult and the most intimate of all Irish problems is in a fair way towards a satisfactory and permanent solution.

It will presently be seen how the agrarian policy pursued by the Prussian government in Poland compares with that of the British government in Ireland. The land question is, however, only one of a sheaf of questions which in the aggregate constitute the Irish problem. Ecclesiastical, educational, and constitutional questions have demanded, and received, hardly less attention at the hands of the Imperial Legislature.

From the days of Queen Elizabeth to those of Queen Victoria the religious question loomed large on the horizon of Irish politics and baffled the statesmanship of England. Down to the sixteenth century Ireland was less ultramontane in its Catholicism than England; but the clumsy efforts of the Tudor statesmen to impose Protestantism upon a country utterly unprepared for it served to convert the mass of the Irish people into zealous 'Papists'. The peasantry clung to their traditional creed as they clung to their ancestral soil, partly out of sheer affection, but partly in opposition to their English rulers. If the rebellions of the sixteenth century were

essentially political and agrarian, those of the seventeenth century were primarily religious. The growth of Puritanism in England naturally alarmed the Irish Catholics, and the loyalty which they displayed to Charles I, Charles II, and above all to James II, was largely inspired by dread of English Protestantism. The 'Orange' policy initiated by the victories of William III—the penal laws, the proscriptions, the proselytizing, and the bribes held out to converts from Catholicism—did little to wean from their faith the mass of the Irish peasants. Gradually the rigours of the Penal Code were relaxed, but the Act of 1829 came, as we have seen, too late to conciliate the Irish Catholics. The grievance of tithes still remained unremedied, and Protestants still held a position of ascendancy. The former grievance was removed by the Tithes Commutation Act of 1838; while the Protestant ascendancy was finally destroyed by the Disestablishment Act of 1869.

Meanwhile great efforts had been made to improve Irish education. The foundations of a national system of elementary education were laid by Lord Stanley (afterwards Lord Derby) in 1831, but though the shell of Stanley's system remained the whole spirit of its administration was altered. Stanley contemplated a 'mixed' system. The Irish Catholics are and always have been wedded to the denominational principle, and popular prejudice, here as elsewhere, proved far too strong for legislative intention or even for administrative action. English doctrinaires might attempt to divorce religion from education: the Irish people were determined to combine them; and combined in Ireland they are. The good work begun by Stanley was carried on by Peel, who in 1844 increased the grant for elementary education, and in 1845, notwithstanding violent opposition, succeeded in carrying a measure of endowment for the Roman Catholic Seminary of Maynooth. In the same year he established the three Queen's Colleges in Cork, Galway, and Belfast. The intention was that these colleges should be strictly 'undenominational', but again a legislative enactment was defeated by popular pressure steadily applied. The 'godless colleges'

did not solve the problem of higher education in Ireland, and Mr. Gladstone, in 1873, made a courageous but unsuccessful effort to solve it. A much less pretentious but singularly adroit scheme was carried, almost unnoticed, by Disraeli in 1879. Disraeli's Act, though modest in appearance, contained the germ of a great concession to the Irish Catholics. A still greater concession was made by Mr. Birrell, but the results are still doubtful.

There remained the constitutional problem. Whether, as Lord Rosebery suggests, the legislative union might have solved it had Pitt's intentions been carried out, who can tell? The fact remains that whereas the working of the Scottish Union very soon dissipated the suspicions with which the measure had, on both sides of the Tweed, been originally regarded, the Irish Union served only to inaugurate a period of more or less persistent agitation. That agitation has not been entirely quenched by the settlement either of the ecclesiastical or of the agrarian problem. Whether the Home Rule Act, now on the statute book but not yet in operation, is destined to solve the problem is more than doubtful.

No fair-minded critic can, however, deny that, for at least a century, the British people have been making sincere if somewhat blundering and belated efforts to find a solvent, or a series of solvents, for the problems with which Ireland has presented them. That it was not always so is a thesis which might be maintained with some plausibility. But the advice of one of the greatest of Irishmen may, in this connexion, be recorded and adopted. 'I have always held', writes Sir Horace Plunkett, 'that to foster resentment in respect of these old wrongs is as stupid as was the policy which gave them birth; and, even if it were possible to distribute the blame among our ancestors, I am sure we should do ourselves much harm, and no living soul any good, in the reckoning. In my view, Anglo-Irish history is a thing for Englishmen to remember, for Irishmen to forget.' It is finely said. One Englishman has in the foregoing pages endeavoured to recall, for the information of critics, both English and foreign, some salient facts in the story of Anglo-

Irish relations. His own conviction is that the recital suggests, on the part of England, not deliberate malignity, still less persistent brutality, but much characteristic unimaginativeness, some crass stupidity, and, above all, a curiously pervasive irony.

'There have been divers good plots devised, and wise counsels cast already about reformation of that realm; but they say it is the fatal destiny of that land that no purposes whatsoever which are meant for her good will prosper or take good effect; which, whether it proceed from the very genius of the soil, or influence of the stars, or that Almighty God hath not yet appointed the time of her reformation, or that He reserveth her in this unquiet state still for some secret scourge, which shall by her come into England, it is hard to be known, but yet much to be feared.'

Thus wrote Edmund Spenser, himself one of the colonists of Munster, in 1596. His words are as suggestive at the beginning of the twentieth century as they were at the end of the sixteenth.

To return to the question with which we started. How far does English policy in Ireland supply an appropriate *tu quoque* to Prussians who seek to vindicate their own treatment of Poland?

The earlier relations between Prussia and Poland were examined in the last chapter. The acquisitions of Prussia in the three Partitions of 1772, 1793, and 1795; the dismemberment of the Prussian Kingdom by Napoleon at Tilsit; the formation, largely at the expense of Prussian Poland, of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw—these matters call for no further commentary. A word, however, must be said as to the treatment of the Polish question at the Congress of Vienna. The Tsar Alexander was, in 1815, master of the situation, and turned it, as we saw, with great adroitness to the advantage of Russia. Prussia was obliged to acquiesce in the establishment of the 'Congress Kingdom'—virtually Napoleon's Grand Duchy of Warsaw—under the rule of the Tsar, and thus to relinquish the greater part of the acquisitions secured by her in the second and third Partitions. She managed, however, to retain not only her share of the Partition of 1772, but in

addition Posen and Gnesen and the great fortresses of Thorn and Danzig.

Thanks mainly, as we have seen, to Lord Castlereagh there was inserted in the *Final Act* of the Congress a stipulation which was intended to secure to all the Poles some measure of autonomy. The Treaty of Vienna, concluded (May 3, 1815) between Russia and Prussia, further guaranteed the economic unity of Poland. Article 28 of that Treaty ran :

'In order to promote agriculture as much as possible in all parts of ancient Poland, to encourage the Industry of its inhabitants and to ensure their prosperity, the two High Contracting Parties have agreed that . . . the most unlimited circulation for the future and for ever of all articles of growth and industry shall be permitted throughout their Polish provinces (as it existed in 1772).'[1]

Finally, as regards Prussian Poland (with which alone we are now concerned), we have the rescript addressed by King Frederick William III to his subjects in the Grand Duchy of Posen on May 15, 1815:

'You are incorporated', it ran, 'in my monarchy, but you need not, therefore, renounce your nationality. You will enjoy all the advantages of the constitution which I mean to grant to my loyal subjects, and you will receive like the other provinces of my kingdom a provisional constitution. Your religion shall be respected and its ministers shall receive an endowment suitable to their status. Your personal rights and your property shall be placed under the protection of laws which you will yourselves, in future, have a share in making. The use of your language shall be permitted, equally with German, at public meetings, and you will, each according to his capacity, be eligible for official posts in the Grand Duchy.'[2]

The sequel will show how far these premisses have been fulfilled.

For the first fifteen years after the Congress of Vienna, the Prussian Poles had little to complain of. Frederick William III manifested, during that period, a real desire to conciliate them.

[1] Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, i. 113.
[2] *Gesetzsammlung für die Königl. preussisch. Staaten*, 1815, p. 47; ap. Moysset, p. 5.

Prince Antony Radziwill, a great Polish nobleman, was nominated to the Vice-royalty of the Grand Duchy of Posen; Zerboni di Sposetti, also a friend to the Poles, became the first Oberpräsident of the new province; a large share in local administration was left to the native aristocracy; the liberal policy of Stein and Hardenberg, by which the serfs of Brandenburg and Prussia had been converted into peasant proprietors, was extended to Posen in 1823, and by 1837 no less than 21,334 peasant freeholds had been created.[1] Finally, in 1824, a local legislature or Diet was established in Posen.

A sinister change was, however, observable after 1830. The French revolution of that year aroused considerable excitement in Germany. There were outbreaks in Göttingen, in Cassel, in Dresden, in Leipzig, and in Brunswick, and not a little ferment in the liberal south, but neither Prussia nor Austria felt the repercussion. Nevertheless, Metternich dangled the red spectre of revolution before the eyes of Frederick William III and induced him to embark upon a reactionary policy. Another cause contributed to awaken alarm. In November 1830 a revolution broke out in the Congress Kingdom, and, although there was no actual insurrection in Prussian Poland, some 12,000 Prussian Poles went to the assistance of their brethren in the kingdom. Their action was, needless to say, in no way countenanced by the King of Prussia. On the contrary, the attitude of Frederick William III was of considerable assistance to the Tsar, and, according to the most recent historian of Germany, 'contributed directly to the recovery of Warsaw by the Russians'.[2]

The consequences of the abortive rising of 1830 were hardly less grave for the Prussian Poles than for those under the rule of Russia. The Vice-royalty—the most conspicuous emblem of the quasi-independence hitherto enjoyed by Posen—was abolished; and Zerboni was superseded as Oberpräsident by Eduard Heinrich von Flotwell, who was sent to Posen to carry out a policy of thorough Prussianization. Flotwell lost no time in getting to work, and for ten years (1830–41) he

[1] Phillips, *Poland*, p. 182.
[2] Sir A. W. Ward, *History of Germany*, p. 232.

ruled his province with a rod of iron. The native nobles were deprived of all share in local administration; the bureaucratic methods dear to the Brandenburger were on all sides introduced; convents and monasteries were suppressed and their property secularized; heavily encumbered properties were bought on a large scale by the Government, and a deliberate policy of expropriation was initiated.

The accession of Frederick William IV (1840) brought some relief to the Prussian Poles; but the concessions announced at the beginning of the new reign did not survive the upheaval of 1848. The spirit of 1848, with its appeal to the national principle, could not leave the Poles unmoved. The outbreak of the March revolution in Berlin gave the signal for an insurrectionary movement in Posen. A 'national' army of 25,000 men was organized; a provisional Government was set up, and a formal demand was made for the fulfilment of the pledges embodied in the Vienna Act and specifically reiterated by Frederick William III.

The Polish cause evoked a good deal of sympathy among the German Liberals and even in Prussia itself. Nor is this remarkable in view of the fact that Poles were in the forefront of the battle for political liberty in many parts of Germany, and indeed of other countries. The influence of the Poles of the dispersion upon the movement of 1848, as Mr. H. A. L. Fisher has pointed out, has been curiously ignored. They were to be 'found in the Saxon riots of '48; in the Berlin barricades; in the struggle for the Republic in Baden; in the Italian and Hungarian wars of liberation. . . . Homeless and fearless, schooled in war and made reckless by calamity, they have been the nerve of revolution wherever they have been scattered by the winds of misfortune.' [1]

This being so, it can occasion little surprise that the Prussian authorities should have hastened to repress the insurrectionary movement in Posen—still less that Bismarck should from the very outset of his career have regarded Poland with a jealous eye. 'No one can doubt that an independent Poland would be the irreconcilable enemy of Prussia, and would remain so

[1] *The Republican Tradition in Europe*, by H. A. L. Fisher, p. 213.

until they had conquered the mouth of the Vistula and every Polish-speaking village in West and East Prussia, Posnania, and Silesia.' Thus wrote Bismarck as far back as 1848. His conviction was not weakened by the abortive insurrection which broke out in the kingdom in 1863. 'The Polish Question', said Bismarck in that year to Sir Andrew Buchanan, 'is a matter of life and death to us.' The help afforded by Bismarck to Russia during the Polish insurrection of 1863 laid the foundation of his whole diplomatic edifice. Not only was it a 'matter of life and death' to Bismarck that the Russian Poles should be suppressed; it was not less important that Russia should be laid under an obligation to Prussia. The fruits of the friendship then established were gathered in Schleswig-Holstein, at Sadowa, and at Sedan.

Not until those fruits were safely garnered had Bismarck leisure to deal with the Prussian Poles. His Polish policy wears more than one aspect. One is suggested by a story told by M. Moysset. A Polish *grande dame*, visiting a sick peasant, was amazed to find hanging side by side upon the wall the portraits of Pope Leo XIII, Kościuszko, and Bismarck. 'Is Bismarck', she asked, 'held in equal honour in your house with the Holy Father and our national hero?' 'Certainly,' was the reply, 'for that is the great man who has revealed to me, a poor peasant, that I have indeed a Polish fatherland.'[1] To Bismarck, more perhaps than to any other single man, the Prussian Pole owes the realization of the fact that the Poles possess a real national unity, a real national identity.

How did Bismarck succeed in evoking that sentiment? It was evoked by persistent persecution. The attack was first directed against the religion and the education of the Poles. 'The necessity for starting the *Kulturkampf* was imposed upon me', Bismarck himself confessed in his *Recollections*, 'by the Polish side of the question.'[2] His ultimate aim was to Prussianize and to Protestantize the soul of Poland. He began, therefore, with the schools. A law of March 11, 1872,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 30.

[2] Cf. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 171. 'La question polonaise, c'est le culturkampf qui, sous une forme nouvelle, se survit depuis vingt-cinq ans.'

took away the inspection of schools from the clergy and placed it in the hands of government officials. In 1873 the German language was made the exclusive medium for secular instruction, and even for religious instruction, when the pupils were sufficiently advanced to understand it. Two years later attempts were made, though without success, to prevent the use of the native tongue at public meetings. But the curious combination of nationalism and ultramontanism proved too strong even for Bismarck. 'We will not go to Canossa', he had boastfully announced, 'either in the flesh or in the spirit.' Pope Leo XIII was no Hildebrand; yet in the end Bismarck found himself in the neighbourhood of Canossa, though by a circuitous route; and a compromise was effected. The agreement with the Papacy brought no advantage to the Poles. On the contrary, it enabled Bismarck to take further steps towards the Germanization of the Polish children. After Bismarck's fall the pressure was relaxed owing to Caprivi's need for the support of the Polish parliamentary party in carrying the Army Bills. But the relaxation was only temporary. The formation, in 1894, of the *Deutscher Ostmarken-Verein* announced the initiation of a fresh attempt to Germanize the Eastern marches of the Empire. Association has, however, been countered by association. The use of the Polish tongue, so far from being abandoned, has ominously increased. Polish names are more than ever conspicuous on the sign-boards of the shops. Even the children have been driven into revolt. In 1902 the members of the Prussian *Landtag* learnt to their disgust that Polish children had been cruelly flogged for refusing to say the Lord's Prayer in German. In 1906 German was reintroduced as the medium for religious instruction; as a result, 400,000 children went 'on strike'. The attempt to capture the schools in the interests of 'Germanization' has proved, therefore, not merely a failure, but a ridiculous failure. In marked contrast to Prussian policy in Poland we may recall the fact that the British government pays considerable sums for the teaching of the Irish language, and even bribes Irishmen with State scholarships and prizes to learn that language.

Economic experiments in Poland have met with no better success than educational. Since the year 1886 Prussia has expended some £60,000,000 in an attempt to plant Germans on the soil of Poland; nearly 1,000,000 acres of land have been acquired, and about 450 new villages have been built. But if the effort of the Germanizers has been prodigious, it has been more than countered by that of the Poles. The latter met the policy of colonization by a policy of association. The work of the *Ansiedelungs-Kommission* was more than matched by that of the Polish Agricultural Unions, Land Banks, and Credit Societies. There were, before the War, in Polish Prussia nearly 300 credit institutions, disposing of a capital of 498,631,000 fr. derived solely from Polish sources, belonging absolutely to the Poles, and directed by them, according to the high authority of Mr. Geoffrey Drage, with real skill. 'The Poles', writes Mr. Drage, 'have thus realized one of the most efficacious means of defence against the attacks by which their life as a nation is threatened. The loan banks, trade associations, &c. which have sprung up in Posen and West Prussia since 1860 are instruments of the national policy . . . and are gradually becoming, if they are not already, the leading political power.'[1] Precisely parallel have been the results of the agrarian policy so sedulously pursued by Bismarck and his successors. The intrusion of the Government into the Estate-market sent up the price of land so rapidly that between 1900 and 1912 it nearly doubled;[2] some Poles took advantage of the artificially-inflated price to sell out and invest the proceeds either in trade or in land elsewhere; but most of the land was purchased from Germans who were anxious to escape from an ineligible neighbourhood; with the final result that there are said to be more Polish landowners to-day than when Bismarck embarked on the 'plantation' policy in 1886. In West Prussia and Posnania 32,283 farms comprising 299,941 hectares passed between 1896 and

[1] Drage, *Pre-War Statistics of Poland and Lithuania*, p. 70. Cf. also Bernhard, *Das Polnische Gemeinwesen im Preussischen Staat*, 1910, p. 154.

[2] 'A hectare obtained by the medium of the Peasants' Bank cost in 1900, 388 fr., and in 1912, 757 fr.'—DRAGE, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

1912 from German hands to Polish, while the number of farms passing from Poles to Germans was only 16,105, comprising 200,253 hectares—showing a balance in favour of the Poles of over 16,000 holdings and nearly 100,000 hectares.[1] Well might a Pole declare: 'C'est un vaudeville historique'; not without reason did the Polish peasant put Bismarck side by side with Kościuszko and the Pope. The result is a triumph for moral as against material forces. As M. Martin had admirably put it:

'C'est en Pologne surtout que la question sociale est une question morale. Ainsi s'explique, mieux que par les secrets d'une organisation savante, mais fortuite, et à laquelle les Allemands peuvent opposer d'autres forces efficaces, la défaite de l'argent prussien par le patriotisme polonais.'[2]

'We shall be masters of Poland', said Count Raczynski in 1848, 'when we are better educated, and richer than the Germans.' Starting from that maxim, the Poles, as Mr. Drage has shown, 'have set themselves, first by the Marcinkowski and kindred societies, to educate a professional and commercial class which has ousted both Germans and Jews completely, and secondly by a network of co-operative societies to obtain control of the commercial and agricultural resources of the country, so that when political supremacy comes it will not be the first but the last step to independence.'[3]

It is not easy perhaps for an Englishman to judge impartially the policy pursued by his own countrymen in Ireland or by the Prussians in Poland. But an attempt has been made in the foregoing pages to set forth the facts in the spirit not of an advocate but of an historian. The facts may be allowed to speak for themselves. English gold has been poured out in order to transform the Irish tenants into occupying owners and thus root them permanently in their native soil; Prussian gold has been lavishly expended in a futile effort to expropriate the Polish landowners and to plant Germans in their place. England during the last hundred years has been making tardy

[1] Drage, *op. cit.*, p. 31. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 193. [3] *Op. cit.*, p. 82.

amends for the blunders of the past by admitting Irish Catholics to full civil rights; by endowing Catholic seminaries; by establishing a Catholic University; by disestablishing and disendowing the Church of the ascendancy. Prussia has been engaged in a *Kulturkampf* which in its origin was admittedly aimed at the Catholics of Poland. That *Kulturkampf*, as Mr. Drage has truly said, 'was the beginning of the stern schooling . . . which has left the Prussian Poles the soundest economic Polish unit', which has fitted the 'Prussian Poles to lead their fellow countrymen', and has prepared German Poland to 'form the nucleus of a new Government'.[1] Similarly, in regard to education, the English government has subsidized the teaching of Irish in Irish schools; the government of Prussia has done all in its power to eradicate the use of the native Polish tongue.

That England's past record in Ireland is clean no candid student will affirm; but the attempt to find a parallel with Prussian policy in Poland must, to be successful, involve remote historical research. There was 'plantation' in the seventeenth century; there was persecution and proscription in the eighteenth; but the nineteenth has been in the main devoted, sometimes with lack of tact though never of goodwill, to the task of atonement and reparation.

So far Prussia has not even pretended that she means to embark upon a similar policy in Poland. The failure of Bismarckian ruthlessness has never been acknowledged. The Kaiser has not announced any reversal of his Polish policy. All that the proclamation of November 5, 1916, did was to promise some undefined form of independence to Russian Poland under a German monarch. The status of Prussian Poland remains unchanged.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

BALKAN STATES
1878-1914
English Miles
0 50 100 200
HUNGARY
BUKOVINA
MOLDAVIA
RUSSIA
Jassy
BESSARABIA
TRANSYLVANIA
Temesvar
Rother Turm P
Vulkan P
Tömös P
Galatz
1856
1878
1878
RUMANIA
DOBRUDJA
AUSTRIA
BOSNIA
Belgrade
Orsova
ROUMANIA
Bucharest
WALLACHIA
Silistria
Serajevo
SERBIA
Vidin
Rustchuk
1913
BLACK SEA
DALMATIA (AUSTRIA)
HERZEGOVINA
Nish
Plevna
Varna
Pirot
BULGARIA
Turnovo
MONTE NEGRO
Cettinje
Sofia
Burgas
ADRIATIC SEA
Cattaro
1885
Philippopolis
1913
Uskub
1913
1913
Adrianople
1913
Durazzo
Ochrida
Monastir
Constantinople
ALBANIA
ITALY
Brindisi
1913
Valona
1913
Salonica
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
Otranto
Janina
Lemnos
Corfu
Larissa
1881
AEGEAN SEA
IONIAN SEA
S. Maura
Mitylene
GREECE
Smyrna
Cephalonia
Chios
Zante
PELOPONNESUS
Athens
Samos
Crete
Acquisitions of Montenegro 1913
" " Roumania "
" " Bulgaria "
" " Serbia "
" " Greece "
Ceded to Bulgaria by the Treaty of London May 30th 1913, retroceded to Turkey Sept. 29th 1913.
State Frontiers
Old "

CHAPTER XI

THE PROBLEM OF THE NEAR EAST

A Preliminary Survey

'Dès qu'il y eut des Turcs en Europe, il y eut une question d'Orient, et dès que la Russie fut une puissance européenne, elle prétendit résoudre cette question à son profit.'—Albert Sorel.

'Amongst the great problems of our age none is more fitted to occupy the thoughts, not only of the professional statesman but of every keen-sighted individual who takes an interest in politics, than the so-called Eastern Question. It is the pivot upon which the general politics of the century now drawing to an end are turning, and it will be so for the coming century also. . . . It is not a question which has disturbed the peace of Europe only yesterday: it is not even a production of this century. It has exercised a powerful influence upon the course of the world's history for above 500 years.'—J. J. I. von Döllinger.

The words of Dr. von Döllinger, quoted above, were written at the close of the nineteenth century. They state, on the one hand, an indisputable fact; on the other, they contain a remarkable prediction which is already in process of fulfilment. The present War is destined, we would fain hope, to untie many historical knots; to solve many political problems; to determine for all time many questions which for years past have baffled the skill of statesmen and diplomatists. Some critics may be tempted to suggest that the soldiers and sailors, if unhampered by politics and diplomacy, would have cut the knots long ago, and they are entitled to point to the effective intervention of Codrington at Navarino. But this is a parenthesis which it is unnecessary to pursue. Certain it is that among the difficulties which remain to be solved there is none more intricate and tangled, and none the solution of which is more eagerly or more confidently anticipated, than the Problem of the Near East.

From time immemorial Europe has been confronted with an 'Eastern Question'. In its essence the problem is un-

changing. It has arisen from the clash in the lands of South-Eastern Europe between the habits, ideas, and preconceptions of the West and those of the East. But, although one in essence, the problem has assumed different aspects at different periods. In the dawn of authentic history it is represented by the contest between the Greeks and the Persians, the heroic struggle enshrined in the memory of Marathon, Thermopylae, and Salamis. To the Roman the 'Eastern Question' centred in his duel with the great Hellenistic monarchies. In the early Middle Ages the problem was represented by the struggle between the forces of Islam and those of Christianity. That struggle reached its climax, for the time being, in the great battle of Tours (732). The chivalry of Western Europe renewed the contest, some centuries later, in the Crusades. The motives which inspired that movement were curiously mixed, but essentially they afforded a further manifestation of the secular rivalry between Cross and Crescent; a contest between Crusaders and Infidels for possession of the lands hallowed to every Christian by their association with the life of Christ on earth.

With none of these earlier manifestations of an immemorial antithesis is this chapter concerned. Its main purpose is to sketch in broad outline the historical evolution of a problem which has baffled the ingenuity of European diplomatists, in a general sense, for more than five hundred years, more specifically and insistently for about a century. In the vocabulary of English diplomacy the *Eastern Question* was not included until the period of the Greek War of Independence (1821–9), though the phrase is said to be traceable at least as far back as the battle of Lepanto (1571). A definition of the 'Question', at once authoritative and satisfactory, is hard to come by. Lord Morley, obviously appreciating the difficulty, once spoke of it, with characteristic felicity, as 'that shifting, intractable, and interwoven tangle of conflicting interests, rival peoples, and antagonistic faiths that is veiled under the easy name of the Eastern Question'. A brilliant French writer, M. Édouard Driault, has defined it as 'Le problème de la ruine de la puissance politique de l'Islam'. But this definition seems

unnecessarily broad. Dr. Miller, with more precision, has explained it thus: 'The Near Eastern Question may be defined as the problem of filling up the vacuum created by the gradual disappearance of the Turkish Empire from Europe.' But though this definition is unexceptionable as far as it goes, our purpose seems to demand something at once more explicit and more explanatory. Putting aside the many difficult problems connected with the position of Ottoman power in Asia and Africa, the 'Eastern Question' may be taken, for the purpose of the present survey, to include:

First and primarily: The part played by the Ottoman Turks in the history of Europe since they first crossed the Hellespont in the middle of the fourteenth century;

Secondly: The position of the loosely designated Balkan States, which, like Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Roumania, have gradually re-emerged as the waters of the Ottoman flood have subsided; or, like Montenegro, were never really submerged; or, like Bosnia, the Herzegovina, Transylvania, and the Bukovina, have been annexed by the Habsburgs;

Thirdly: The problem of the Black Sea; egress from it, ingress to it; the command of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and, above all, the capital problem as to the possession of Constantinople;

Fourthly: The position of Russia in Europe; her natural impulse towards the Mediterranean; her repeated attempts to secure a permanent access thereto by the narrow straits; her relation to her co-religionists under the sway of the Sultan, more particularly to those of her own Slavonic nationality;

Fifthly: The position of the Habsburg Empire, and in particular its anxiety for access to the Aegean, and its relations, on the one hand, with the Southern Slavs in the annexed provinces of Dalmatia, Bosnia, and the Herzegovina, as well as in the adjacent kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro; and, on the other hand, with the Roumans of Transylvania and the Bukovina; and

Finally: The attitude of the European Powers in general, and England in particular, towards all or any of the questions enumerated above.

The primary factor in the problem is, then, the presence, embedded in the living flesh of Europe, of an alien substance. That substance is the Ottoman Turk. Akin to the European family neither in creed, in race, in language, in social customs, nor in political aptitudes and traditions, the Ottomans have for more than five hundred years presented to the other European Powers a problem, now tragic, now comic, now bordering on burlesque, but always baffling and paradoxical. How to deal with this alien substance has been, for centuries, the essence and core of the Problem of the Near East.

Many contradictory attributes have been predicated of the Ottoman Turks. They have been delineated by friends and foes respectively as among the most amiable, and unquestionably the most detestable of mankind; but on one point all observers are agreed. The Turk never changes. What he was when he first effected a lodgement upon European soil, that he remains to-day. Essentially the Ottoman Turk has been from first to last a fighting man, a herdsman, and a nomad. 'In the perpetual struggle', writes one, 'between the herdsman and the tiller of the soil, which has been waged from remote ages on the continents of Europe and Asia, the advance of the Ottomans was a decisive victory for the children of the steppes. This feature of their conquest is of no less fundamental importance than its victory for Islam.' 'The Turks', writes another, 'never outgrew their ancestral character of predacious nomads; they take much and give little.'

Thus, to close observers, the Turks have always given the impression of transitoriness; of being strangers and sojourners in a land that is not their own. 'Here', they have seemed to say, 'we have no abiding city.' 'A band of nomadic warriors we are here to-day; we shall be gone to-morrow.'

But the sense of temporary occupation was not inconsistent with a rigid conservatism as long as the occupation might last. And in nothing have the Ottomans shown themselves more conservative than in fulfilment of the obligations which they inherited from their predecessors. No sooner were they masters of the imperial city than they made it plain to the world that they regarded themselves as the legitimate heirs of

the Byzantine Empire. No Greek could have exhibited more zeal than Sultan Mohammed in resisting the encroachments, whether territorial or ecclesiastical, of the Latins. Venetians, Genoese, and Franks were alike made to realize that the Turk was at least as Greek as his predecessor in title. Most clearly was this manifested in his dealings with the Orthodox Church. In every way that Church was encouraged to look to the Sultan as its protector against the pretensions of the rival Rome. Thus the Patriarch became in effect the Pope of the Eastern Church. He was invested, indeed, with extraordinary privileges. After the conquest, as before, he was permitted to summon periodical synods, to hold ecclesiastical courts, and to enforce the sentences of the courts with spiritual penalties.[1]

Nor was the favour shown to the Greeks confined to ecclesiastics. On the contrary, the Sultans developed among the Greek laymen a sort of administrative aristocracy. Known as Phanariots from the *Phanar*, the particular quarter which they inhabited in Constantinople, these shrewd and serviceable Greeks were utilized by the Turks for the performance of duties for which the conquerors had neither liking nor aptitude. The Turk is curiously devoid of that sense which the ancient Greeks described as *political*. He desires neither to govern nor to be governed. He is a military not a 'political animal'. To conquer and to enjoy in ease the fruits of conquest has always been his ideal of life. With the dull details of administration he has never cared to concern himself. That was the work of 'slaves', and as a fact, though none but a Moslem could in theory aspire to the highest administrative posts, the actual work of administration was confided to the Phanariots. Whether this practice, in the long run, contributed either to the well-being of Christianity in the dominions of the Porte, or to the better government of the Greek population, is a moot point. Here it must suffice to say that while the Higher Clergy of the Orthodox Church became almost wholly dependent upon the State, the parish priests laboured with extraordinary devotion to keep alive among their flocks the flame of nationality even more perhaps than the tenets of

[1] Hutton, *Constantinople*, p. 156.

Orthodoxy. To their efforts, maintained with remarkable perseverance throughout a period of four and a half centuries, the success of the Greek revival, in the early nineteenth century, was largely due.

The attitude of the Ottomans towards the Greek Christians was inspired by a mixture of motives. It was due partly to an innate sense of toleration, and still more perhaps to invincible indolence. In view of the hideous massacres perpetrated by Abdul Hamid it is not easy to insist that religious toleration is one of the cardinal virtues of the Turk. Yet the fact is incontestable.[1] Although the Ottoman State was essentially theocratic in theory and in structure, although the sole basis of political classification was ecclesiastical,[2] the Turk was one of the least intolerant of rulers. He was also one of the most indolent. So long as his material necessities were supplied by his subjects the precise methods of local government and administration were matters of indifference to him. This had its good and its bad side. It left the conquered peoples very much at the mercy of petty tyrants, but where the local circumstances were unfavourable to local tyrannies it left the people very much to themselves. Hence that considerable measure of local autonomy which has frequently been noted as one of the many contradictory features of Ottoman government in Europe, and which largely contributed, when the time came, to the resuscitation of national self-consciousness among the conquered peoples.

The traits already delineated may perhaps account for another marked characteristic of Ottoman history. Whether it be due to pride or to indolence, to spiritual exclusiveness or political indifference, the fact remains that the Turks have neither absorbed nor been absorbed by the conquered peoples; still less have they permitted any assimilation among the conquered peoples. Mr. Freeman put this point, with characteristic emphasis, many years ago:

[1] Cf. a recent writer: 'The Osmanlis were the first nation in modern history to lay down the principle of religious freedom as the corner-stone in the building up of their nation.' Gibbons, *op. cit.*, and cf. an interesting note on the Armenian massacres, p. 74.

[2] The Ottoman government took no account of 'nationalities'. If a Turkish subject was not a Moslem, he was a 'Greek'.

'The Turks, though they have been in some parts of Turkey for five hundred years, have still never become the people of the land, nor have they in any way become one with the people of the land. They still remain as they were when they first came in, a people of strangers bearing rule over the people of the land, but in every way distinct from them.'

The original Ottoman invaders were relatively few in numbers, and throughout the centuries they have continued to be 'numerically inferior to the aggregate of their subjects'. But for two facts it is almost certain that like the Teuton invaders of Gaul they would have been absorbed by the people whom they conquered. The Teuton conquerors of Gaul were pagans, the Turks, on the contrary, brought with them a highly developed creed which virtually forbade assimilation. Under the strict injunctions of the Koran the infidel must either embrace Islamism, or suffer death, or purchase, by the payment of a tribute, a right to the enjoyment of life and property. Only in Albania was there any general acceptance of the Moslem creed among the masses of the population. In Bosnia, and in a less degree in Bulgaria, the larger landowners purchased immunity by conversion; but, generally speaking, the third of the alternatives enjoined by the Koran was the one actually adopted. Christianity consequently survived in most parts of the Turkish Empire. And the Turk shrewdly turned its survival to his own advantage. The second pertinent consideration is that the conquered peoples were hopelessly divided amongst themselves. Before the coming of the Turk the Bulgarians had been constantly at the throats of the Serbians, and both at those of the Greeks. This antagonism the Turk set himself sedulously to inflame, and with conspicuous success. As a close and discriminating observer has justly said: 'they have always done and still do all in their power to prevent the obliteration of racial, linguistic, and religious differences,' with the result that 'they have perpetuated and preserved, as in a museum, the strange medley which existed in South-Eastern Europe during the last years of the Byzantine Empire'.[1]

[1] Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*, p. 16. Cf. Rambaud, ap. *Hist. Générale*, iv. 751: 'L'assimilation, l'absorption de l'un des deux éléments par l'autre,

If the Turk was not, in the Aristotelian sense, a 'political animal', still less was he an 'economic man'. He adhered faithfully to his primitive nomadic instincts. There is a proverbial saying in the East: *where the Turk plants his foot the grass never grows again.* To a nomad it is a matter of indifference whether it does or not. He is a herdsman, not a tiller of the soil. Agriculture and commerce are alike beneath his notice, except, of course, as a source of revenue. Here, as in the lower ranks of the administrative hierarchy, the Greek could be pre-eminently useful to his new sovereign. Consequently the city Greeks in Constantinople, for example, and Salonika and Athens, were protected by a substantial tariff against foreign competition. In the sixteenth century the expulsion of the Moors from Grenada led to a considerable influx of Moors and Spanish Jews into Salonika, where they still predominate, and even into Constantinople. In them and also in the Armenians the Greek traders found powerful competitors, both in finance and commerce. For the governing Turks these matters had no interest except in so far as they affected the contributions to the imperial treasury. So long as that was full it mattered nothing to them who were the contributors, or whence their wealth was derived.

Such were some of the outstanding characteristics of the people who in the middle of the fifteenth century crossed from the southern to the northern shore of the Hellespont, and effected upon European soil that encampment from which they are not yet completely dislodged.

We may now trace, in brief outline, the main stages by which the rule of the Ottomans was established in Europe, and explain the reasons for its initial success and its subsequent decadence.

The origins of the Turkish tribe, subsequently known as the Osmanlis or Ottomans, are shrouded in baffling obscurity. But the Ottomans emerge into the realm of tolerably authentic history in the thirteenth century. Some two centuries earlier

était impossible grâce à l'opposition du Koran à l'Évangile, du croissant à la croix. Plus d'une fois les Osmanlis ayant conscience de leur infériorité numérique s'inquiétèrent de cette situation grosse de périls pour l'avenir de leur puissance.'

the Seljukian Turks had established a great Empire in Asia Minor with its capital at Nicaea. By assuming the designation of Sultans of Roum, these Seljuk potentates flung down a challenge to the lords of the new Rome on the Bosphorus, and of this challenge the crusading movement was a direct consequence. From Nicaea the Seljuks were driven back to Iconium, which may yet become the capital of their Ottoman cousins. The latter, driven from their original home in the Farther East by the pressure of the Moguls, settled in Anatolia, under the protection of the Seljuks, in the early years of the thirteenth century. Under Osman or Othman (1288–1326),[1] these migrant herdsmen gradually supplanted their protectors as the dominant power in the hinterland of Asia Minor. Under Othman's son Orkhan (1326–59) a notable advance was registered. Broussa, Nicaea, Nicomedia, and the greater part of the Byzantine Empire in Asia fell into the hands of the Othmans, and in 1345 their help was invoked by the rival Emperors who were fighting for possession of the pitiful remnant of the Eastern Empire. Orkhan went to the assistance of the Emperor John Cantacuzenos in 1345, and was rewarded by the hand of Theodora, daughter of Cantacuzenos and granddaughter of the Bulgarian Tsar. This marriage may be regarded as the first step towards the establishment of an Ottoman-Byzantine Empire in Europe. In 1349 Orkhan's assistance was again invoked by his father-in-law, to help in repelling the attacks of the Serbians, now at the zenith of their power, upon Macedonia. Orkhan's response was suspiciously prompt, and again a large body of Ottoman warriors feasted their eyes with a vision of the promised land.

Thus far the Ottoman horsemen, once their mission was accomplished, had duly withdrawn to their home on the Asiatic shore. But we are now on the eve of one of the cardinal events in world-history. That event was, in one sense, the natural sequel to those which immediately preceded it; nevertheless it stands out as marking the definite opening of a new chapter. In 1353 Cantacuzenos once more appealed for

[1] From him the tribe, destined to fame as the conquerors of Constantinople and inheritors of the Byzantine Empire, took their name.

the help of the Ottoman Sultan against the Serbians: accordingly, Orkhan sent over his son Suleiman Pasha, by whose aid the Serbians were defeated at Demotika, and the Greeks recaptured the Thracian capital Adrianople. In acknowledgement of these signal services Suleiman Pasha received the fortress of Tzympe, and there the Ottomans effected their first lodgement on European soil. Much to the chagrin of the rival emperors, Gallipoli fell before the Ottomans' assault in the following year (1354), and a few years later Demotika also was taken. By this time the breach between Orkhan and his father-in-law was complete, and henceforward the Osmanli horsemen fought in Europe no longer as auxiliaries but as principals. The grip which they had now got upon the European shore of the Dardanelles was never afterwards relaxed.

Before proceeding to glance at the wonderful achievements of the Ottomans in Europe it may be desirable to see something of the condition of the lands over which they were destined to bear rule.

The Greek Empire was, as we have hinted, in the last stage of emasculate decay. Territorially, it had shrunk to the narrowest limits, little wider, in fact, than those, to which the Ottoman Empire in Europe is reduced to-day. The Empire of Trebizond represented the remnant of its possessions in Asia, while in Europe, apart from Constantinople and Thrace, it held only the Macedonian coast with the city of Salonika and the Eastern Peloponnesus. Hungary, Transylvania, Wallachia, Croatia, and Bosnia owned the sway of Lewis the Great; the Serbian Empire stretched from Belgrade to the Gulf of Corinth, from the Adriatic to the Aegean: Bulgaria held what we know as Bulgaria proper and Eastern Roumelia; Dalmatia, Corfu, Crete, and Euboea were in the hands of Venice; the Knights of St. John were in possession of Rhodes; while the Franks still held the Kingdom of Cyprus, the Principality of Achaia, the Duchies of Athens, Naxos, and Cephalonia, not to speak of many of the Aegean islands. Little, therefore, was left to the successors of the Caesars in Constantinople.

When the Romans had first made themselves masters of South-Eastern Europe they had found three great races in possession: the Illyrians, the Thracians, and the Hellenes. The Illyrians, who established the kingdom of Epirus in the fourth century B.C., were represented in the thirteenth century, as they are still, by the mountaineers of Albania. The Thracians, dominant during the Macedonian supremacy, mingled with Trojan's colonists in Dacia to form the people represented by the modern Roumanians. But neither of these aboriginal races would perhaps have preserved, through the ages, their identity but for the existence of the third race, the Greeks. It was the Greeks who, by their superiority to their Roman conquerors in all the elements of civilization, prevented the absorption of the other races by the Romans, and so contributed to that survival of separate nationalities which, from that day to this, has constituted one of the special peculiarities of Balkan politics. Of the Illyrians in Albania it need only be said that they have successfully resisted absorption by the Turks as they had previously resisted similar efforts on the part of Romans, Byzantines, and Slavs.

The Thracians in the Danubian Principalities have played a more important part in Balkan history. As regards Roumania, that history is largely the outcome of geography. Just as Hungarians represent a great Magyar wedge thrust in between the Northern and the Southern Slavs, so do the Roumanians represent a Latin wedge, distinct and aloof from all their immediate neighbours, though not devoid, especially in language, of many traces of Slav influences. Towards the close of the third century (*circ.* A.D. 271) the Emperor Aurelian was compelled by Barbarian inroads to abandon his distant colony and to withdraw the Roman legions, and for nearly a thousand years, reckoning to the Tartar invasion of 1241, Dacia was nothing but a highway for successive tides of Barbarian invaders, Goths, Huns, Lombards, Avars, and Slavs. The Daco-Romans themselves were completely submerged.

But though submerged they were not dissipated. The southern portion of what is now Roumania emerged, towards the close of the thirteenth century, as the Principality of

Wallachia (or Muntenia, i. e. mountain-land); the northern, a century later, came to be known as the Principality of Moldavia. Both principalities were founded by immigrant Rouman nobles from Transylvania, and, as a consequence, Roumania has always been distinguished from the other Balkan provinces by the survival of a powerful native aristocracy. In Serbia the nobles were exterminated; in Bosnia they saved their property by the surrender of their faith; in Roumania alone did they retain both.

Such was the position of the Danubian principalities when the Ottomans began their career of conquest in South-Eastern Europe. The principalities had never been in a position, like their neighbours to the south and west of them, to aspire to a dominant place in Balkan politics. Nor were they, like those neighbours, exposed to the first and full fury of the Ottoman attack.

The attack was irresistible, and within two hundred years almost the whole of the varied and widely distributed dominions enumerated in the foregoing paragraphs—to say nothing of extra-European lands—had been swept into the net of the Ottoman Empire. Adrianople was snatched from the feeble hands of the Byzantine Emperor in 1361, and thenceforward until 1453 was the European capital of the Turkish Emir. The Bulgarians had to surrender Philippolis in 1363, Sophia in 1382, while the destruction of Tirnovo in 1393 marked the extinction, for nearly five hundred years, of Bulgarian independence. Meanwhile, a crushing defeat had been inflicted upon a great Slavonic combination. The historic battle fought upon the plain of Kossovo (1389) meant more than the overthrow of the Serbian Empire: it meant the political effacement, for many long years, of the Southern Slavs.[1] By this time, however, Christendom was awakening to the gravity of the Ottoman peril. Still greater was the alarm when in 1396 Sigismond of Hungary, at the head of a Western Crusade, was overthrown in the battle of Nicopolis. But the seat of Empire

[1] Serbia was at once reduced to the position of a tributary principality, and was annexed to the Ottoman Empire in 1459. Bosnia was annexed in 1465.

was still untaken, and in the early years of the fifteenth century it seemed not impossible that the final disaster might yet be averted, that Constantine's city might yet be saved from the grip of the Moslem.

The attention of the Turkish conquerors was temporarily averted from Constantinople, first by the advance of Timur the Tartar—the famous Tamerlane—and a little later by the brilliant exploits of George Castriotes, better known as Iskender Bey or Scanderbeg, and better still as 'the Dragon of Albania'. For nearly a quarter of a century Scanderbeg carried on guerrilla warfare against the Turks; in 1461 the independence of Albania was acknowledged and the 'Dragon' was recognized as lord of Albania and Thessaly.[1] But the onward rush of Ottoman waters was not really arrested by this memorable episode. In 1453 the Imperial city fell before the assault of Mohammed, and the Greek Empire was at an end.

Whether regard be paid to historical sentiment or to political, economic, intellectual, and spiritual consequences, the capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans must assuredly be counted as one of the most significant events in the history of the world. The final extinction of the older Roman Empire; the blocking of the ancient paths of commerce;[2] the diversion of trade, and, with trade, of political importance from the Mediterranean lands; the discovery of America and the Cape route to the East; the emergence of England from the economic sloth and obscurity of the Middle Ages; the new birth of humanism; the impulse to religious questionings; the development of national polities and national Churches—all these results and others may be attributed indirectly and many of them directly to the Turkish conquest of the city of Constantine.

For two hundred and fifty years after the capture of Constantinople the Turks continued to be a terror to Europe. For many years they waged successful wars with Venice and with Hungary; early in the sixteenth century they extended

[1] After Scanderbeg's death (1457) Albania was annexed to the Ottoman Empire.

[2] The subsequent conquest of Syria and Egypt blocked the Southern, as that of Constantinople had blocked the Northern routes.

their sway over Syria, Egypt, Arabia, and northern Mesopotamia; Rhodes was captured in 1522, and Hungary, except for a narrow strip left to the Habsburgs, was annexed to their Empire as the Pashalik of Buda (1526); the Roumans of Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia were reduced to vassaldom. Turkish power reached its zenith during the reign of Suleiman 'the Magnificent' (1520–66). The Turkish 'Emirs' had long ago exchanged the title for that of Sultan, and to the Sultanate Suleiman's predecessor had added the Caliphate. Successor to the Prophet; spiritual father of the whole Moslem world; Suleiman ruled as temporal lord from Buda to Basra, from the Danube to the Persian Gulf.

'On the north [says Finlay] their frontiers were guarded against the Poles by the fortress of Kamenietz, and against the Russians by the walls of Azof; while to the south the rock of Aden secured their authority over the southern coast of Arabia, invested them with power in the Indian Ocean, and gave them the complete command of the Red Sea. To the east, the Sultan ruled the shores of the Caspian, from the Kour to the Tenek; and his dominions stretched westward along the southern coast of the Mediterranean, where the farthest limits of the regency of Algiers, beyond Oran, meet the frontiers of the empire of Morocco. By rapid steps the Ottomans completed the conquest of the Seljouk sultans in Asia Minor, of the Mamlouk sultans of Syria and Egypt, of the fierce corsairs of Northern Africa, expelled the Venetians from Cyprus, Crete, and the Archipelago, and drove the knights of St. John of Jerusalem from the Levant, to find a shelter at Malta. It was no vain boast of the Ottoman Sultan that he was the master of many kingdoms, the ruler of three continents and the lord of two seas.'

The achievement was indeed stupendous, but its brilliance was evanescent. The seeds of decay were already germinating even amid the splendours of the reign of Suleiman. The astonishing success of the Ottoman invaders was due partly to conditions external to themselves, partly to their own characteristics and institutions. The irrecoverable decrepitude of the Greek Empire; the proverbial lack of political cohesion among the Slav peoples; the jealousy and antagonism of the Christian Powers; the high military prowess and shrewd statesmanship of many of the earlier Sultans—all these things

contributed to the amazing rapidity with which the Ottomans overran South-Eastern Europe. But unquestionably the most potent instrument of conquest was forged in the institution of Christian child-tribute, the formation of the famous Corps of Janissaries.

After the middle of the sixteenth century, however, the Janissaries lost some of their original characteristics. In 1566 members of the Corps were permitted to marry, and in time to enrol their sons. They began, therefore, to look with jealousy upon the admission of the tribute-children, and before the end of the seventeenth century the tribute ceased to be levied. Corruption, meanwhile, was eating into the vitals of Ottoman government, both in the capital and in the provinces. Worse still, the soldiers of the Crescent continued to fight, but no longer to conquer. The only permanent conquests effected by the Turk after 1566 were those of Cyprus and Crete. Ceasing to advance, the Turkish power rapidly receded. Success in arms was essential to vigour of domestic administration, and both depended upon the personal qualities of the rulers.

After Suleiman there was hardly one man of mark among the Sultans until the accession of Mahmud the Second in 1808. When absolutism ceases to be efficient, decadence is necessarily rapid. In the case of the Turks it was temporarily arrested by the emergence of a remarkable Albanian family, the Kiuprilis, who supplied the Porte with a succession of Viziers during the latter half of the seventeenth century. In the first half of the century the Thirty Years' War had given the Ottomans a magnificent chance of destroying the last bulwark of Western Christendom. The earlier Sultans would never have missed it; but Othman the Second, Mustapha the First, and Ibrahim were not the men to seize it, and Amurath the Fourth was otherwise occupied. Such a chance never recurs. In 1683 the Vizier Kara Mustapha carried the victorious arms of Turkey to the very gates of Vienna; but the Habsburgs were saved by John Sobieski of Poland, and in the last year of the century they inflicted a series of crushing defeats upon the Turk.

The tide had clearly turned. The naval defeat at Lepanto (1571) was, perhaps, a premature indication; after Montecuculi's victory at St. Gothard (1664), and Prince Eugene's at Zenta (1697), men could no longer doubt it. The diplomatic system was also crumbling. Louis the Fourteenth followed as best he could the evil example of Francis the First; but alliance with the Kiuprilis was not the same thing as friendship with Suleiman; the Turk was too hopelessly decadent to be an effective factor in French diplomacy. The Venetian conquest of the Morea, the resounding victories of the Habsburgs, above all the entrance of Russia on the stage of European politics, announced the opening of a new chapter in the history of the Eastern Question.

Ever since the early years of the eighteenth century Europe has been haunted by the apprehension of the consequences likely to ensue upon the demise of the 'sick man', and the subsequent disposition of his heritage. For nearly two hundred years it was assumed that the inheritance would devolve upon one or more of the Great Powers. That the submerged nationalities of the Balkan peninsula would ever again be in a position to exercise any decisive influence upon the destinies of the lands they still peopled was an idea too remote from actualities to engage even the passing attention of diplomacy. From the days of Alberoni a long succession of ingenious diplomatists have been wont to find amusement in schemes for the partition of the Ottoman Empire, but none of these schemes paid any heed to the claims of the indigenous inhabitants. It would, indeed, have been remarkable if they had; for from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth nothing was heard and little was known of Bulgar, Slav, or Greek. The problem of the Near East concerned not the peoples of the Balkans, but the Powers of Europe, and among the Powers primarily Russia.

In its second phase (1702–1820) the Eastern Question might indeed be defined as the Relations of Russia and Turkey. The Habsburgs were frequently on the stage, but rarely in the leading rôle, and the part they played became more and

more definitely subsidiary as the eighteenth century advanced. From the days of Peter the Great to those of Alexander I Europe, not indeed without spasmodic protests from France, acquiesced in the assumption that Russia might fairly claim a preponderant interest in the settlement of the Eastern Question. This acquiescence seems to a later generation the more remarkable in view of the fact that Russia herself had so lately made her entrance upon the stage of European politics. Perhaps, however, this fact in itself explains the acquiescence. Russia was already pushing towards the Black Sea before Western Europe recognized her existence.

By the conquest of Azov (1696) Peter the Great 'opened a window to the South'. It was closed again as a result of the capitulation of the Pruth (1711); but the set-back was temporary, and by the Treaty of Belgrade (1739) Azov was restored in permanence to Russia.

The occupation of Azov was the first breach in the continuity of Ottoman territory round the shores of the Black Sea. Hitherto that sea had been a Turkish lake. But though Russia now touched its shores, no firm grip upon it was obtained until the war which was ended by the Treaty of Kutchuck-Kainardji (1774).

Of all the many treaties concluded between Russia and Turkey that was the most momentous. The Turkish frontier on the north-east was driven back to the Boug; the Tartars to the east of that river were declared independent of the Porte, except in ecclesiastical affairs; important points on the seaboard passed to Russia, and the latter obtained the right of free commercial navigation in the Black Sea. More than this: the Danubian principalities and the islands of the Aegean Archipelago were restored to the Porte, only on condition of better government, and Russia reserved to herself the right of remonstrance if that condition was not observed. Most significant of all: Russia stipulated for certain privileges to be accorded to the Christian subjects of the Porte. To say that thenceforward Russia was the 'protector' of the Greek Christians in the Balkan Peninsula would be technically unwarrantable; but certain it is that the ground was prepared for the

assertion of claims which in 1854 occasioned the Crimean War.

The Treaty of Kainardji was the first of many milestones marking the journey of the Romanoffs towards the Bosphorus. Jassy (1792) was the next; Bucharest followed (1812), and then came (1829) the famous Treaty of Adrianople. But before that milestone was reached new factors in the problem were beginning to make their presence felt.

France had never been unmindful of her interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. By the capitulations of 1535 Francis I had obtained from Suleiman the Magnificent considerable trading privileges in Egypt. D'Argenson, in 1738, published an elaborate plan for the construction of a canal through the Isthmus of Suez, and for restoring, by the enterprise of French traders and the efforts of French administrators, political order and commercial prosperity in Egypt. In the negotiations between Catherine II and the Emperor Joseph for the partition of the Ottoman dominions the interests of France were recognized by the assignment of Egypt and Syria to the French monarch.

But it was Napoleon who first directed the attention of the French people to the high significance of the problem of the Near East. The acquisition of the Ionian Isles; the expedition to Egypt and Syria; the grandiose schemes for an attack on British India; the agreement with the Tsar Alexander for a partition of the Ottoman Empire—all combined to stir the imagination alike of traders and diplomatists in France.

And not in France only. If Napoleon was a great educator of the French, hardly less was he an educator of the English. For some two hundred years English merchants had been keenly alive to the commercial value of the Levant. The politicians, however, were curiously but characteristically tardy in awakening to the fact that the development of events in the Ottoman Empire possessed any political significance for England. The statesmen of the eighteenth century observed with equal unconcern the decrepitude of the Turks and the advance of the Russians. The younger Pitt was the first and only one among them who displayed any interest in what,

to his successors in Downing Street, became known as the *Eastern Question*. With a prescience peculiar to himself he perceived that England was supremely concerned in the ultimate solution of that problem. His earliest diplomatic achievement, the Triple Alliance of 1788, was designed largely, though not exclusively, to circumscribe Russian ambitions in the Near East. But his apprehensions were not shared by his contemporaries. Few English statesmen have commanded the confidence and the ear of the House of Commons as Pitt commanded them. Yet even Pitt failed to arouse attention to this subject, and when in 1790 he proposed a naval demonstration against Russia he suffered one of the few checks in his triumphant parliamentary career. The enemies of England were less slow to perceive where her vital interests lay. 'Really to conquer England', said Napoleon, 'we must make ourselves masters of Egypt.'

Hence the importance attached by General Bonaparte, at the very outset of his political career, to the acquisition of the Ionian Isles. Corfu, Zante, and Cephalonia were, he declared in 1797, more important for France than the whole of Italy. They were the stepping-stones to Egypt; Egypt was a stage on the high road to India. Hardly a generation had elapsed since Clive, strenuously seconded by the elder Pitt, had turned the French out of India. To Egypt, therefore, the thoughts of Frenchmen naturally turned, not only as affording a guarantee for the maintenance of French commercial interests in the Near East, but as a means of threatening the position so recently acquired by England in the Farther East. These ideas constantly recur in the reports of French ambassadors, and Talleyrand, on taking office, found, as he tells us, his official portfolio bulging with schemes for the conquest of Egypt.[1] Napoleon, therefore, in this as in other things, was merely the heir and executor of the traditions of the *ancien régime*. He brought, however, to the execution of these schemes a vigour which, of late years, the old monarchy had conspicuously lacked. But even Napoleon was only partially successful in arousing the attention of the

[1] C. de Freycinet, *La Question d'Égypte*, p. 2.

English people to the importance of the Eastern Mediterranean. The decrepitude of the Turk, the advance of Russia, the ambitions of France were regarded as the accentuation of a problem that was local rather than European.

Not until the events which followed upon the insurrection of the Greeks in 1821 did the English Foreign Office, still less did the English public, begin to take a sustained interest in the development of events in South-Eastern Europe.

The Greek revolution was indeed sufficiently startling to arrest the attention even of the careless. For over four hundred years the peoples of the peninsula had been entirely submerged beneath the Turkish flood: the mountaineers of Montenegro never acknowledged the lordship of Stamboul; no government can cope successfully with the irrepressible Albanians; the Roumans in the Danubian principalities always retained, except in the eighteenth century, a considerable measure of autonomy, but of the Greek 'nation', of the Southern Slavs, or of the Bulgarians there is no real political record from the end of the fourteenth century to the nineteenth. Yet the tradition of former greatness survived: nourished among the Serbian peasants by ballads and folk-literature; among the Greeks by persistence of language and the memories of Hellenic culture; among all the subject peoples by the devoted labours of their parish priests. While the Ottoman Empire was at its zenith the lot of the conquered peoples was far from being unendurable. So long as the Sultans were provided with child-tribute and with ample revenue they did not worry about the details of local administration. Thus the peasants of Serbia, the territorial aristocracy of Bosnia, the Bulgarian towns, and the Greek merchants enjoyed a considerable measure of local autonomy. With the decay of Ottoman efficiency things got worse for the provinces. Individual Greeks and even other provincials might and did play a prominent part in central administration, but as the military discipline slackened, as government became more corrupt, as Turkish arms encountered reverses and the borders of the empire began to contract, the subject races were exposed to

grievous oppression. In the eighteenth century hope revived. The Southern Slavs began to look to Austria; the Bulgarians to Russia for deliverance from the Turkish yoke. The Treaty of Kainardji, as we have seen, gave some promise of protection to all the Orthodox Christians. The Greek mariners had long been conspicuous for efficiency; the Greek merchants were making money; the Greek language regained something of its primitive purity, a taste for classical literature revived. But not until the nineteenth century is any real political movement discernible. To this movement the French Revolution may have contributed. At any rate, it is certain that after the Revolution ideas of liberty and even of nationality began to penetrate the Balkan Peninsula. Memories of a sometime greatness, sedulously preserved throughout the ages, once more stirred the hearts of Slavs and Greeks. The workings of the new spirit are first perceptible among the Serbians. A rising, directed in the first instance not against the Porte but against the insubordinate Janissaries in Serbia, was initiated in 1804 by a peasant leader, George Petrovich, better known as Kara George. Appeals for protection addressed successively to Austria and Russia were declined, but by the Treaty of Bucharest the Turks agreed to leave to the Serbs 'the management of their internal affairs'. A year later the country was reconquered by Mahmud the Second, but in 1817 was again in revolt, this time under the leadership of Kara George's rival, Milosh Obrenovich. The latter extorted from the Sultan a certain measure of local autonomy, but not until after the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) did Serbia enjoy anything approaching to real self-government.

To return to the Greek insurrection. In March 1821 Prince Alexander Hypsilanti raised the standard of insurrection in Moldavia; but the Roumanian peasants were suspicious of the Greeks; the Tsar Alexander, on whose sympathy Hypsilanti had confidently counted, frowned upon the enterprise, and the rising ignominiously collapsed. Far different was the fate of the insurrection in the Morea and in the Aegean islands. There, too, there were bitter internal feuds,

and the history of the movement offers, in Mr. Gladstone's words, 'a chequered picture of patriotism and corruption, desperate valour and weak irresolution, honour and treachery'. Nevertheless, the Greek rising is, for three reasons, profoundly significant. It marks, in the first place, the real beginning of the new 'nationality' movement in the Ottoman Empire: secondly, it evoked enthusiastic sympathy in Europe, and particularly in Western Europe; and, thirdly, it revealed for the first time a feeling of rivalry, if not of antagonism, between Russia and Great Britain in Eastern Europe. As far as England is concerned, the Greek insurrection inaugurated an 'Eastern Question'.

Hitherto, the Eastern Question had meant the growth or decline of Ottoman power; a struggle between Turks on the one hand and Austrians or Venetians on the other. More lately it had centred in the rivalry between the Sultan and the Tsar. Henceforward it was recognized, primarily through the action of Russia and the newly aroused sympathies of England, as an international question. The more cautious and the more disinterested of European statesmen have persistently sought to 'isolate' the politics of the Near East. They have almost consistently failed. The Greek insurrection struck a new note. It refused to be isolated. The Tsar Alexander, though deaf to Hypsilanti's appeal, had his own quarrel with Sultan Mahmud. There was therefore an obvious probability that two quarrels, distinct in their origin, would be confused, and that the Tsar would take advantage of the Greek insurrection to settle his own account with the Sultan.

To avoid this confusion of issues was the primary object of English diplomacy. Castlereagh and Canning were fully alive to the significance of the Hellenic movement, alike in its primary aspect and in its secondary reaction upon the general diplomatic situation. And behind the statesmen there was for the first time in England a strong public opinion in favour of determined action in the Near East. The sentiment to which Byron and other Phil-Hellenist enthusiasts appealed with such effect was a curious compound of classicism, liberalism, and nationalism. A people who

claimed affinity with the citizens of the States of ancient Hellas; a people who were struggling for political freedom; who relied upon the inspiring though elusive sentiment of nationality, made an irresistible appeal to the educated classes in England. Canning was in complete accord with the feelings of his countrymen. But he perceived, as few of them could, that the situation, unless dexterously handled, might open out new and dangerous developments. Consequently, he spared no efforts to induce the Sultan to come to terms with the insurgent Greeks lest a worse thing should befall him at the hands of Russia.

The Porte was, as usual, deaf to good advice, and Canning then endeavoured, not without success, to secure an understanding with Russia, and to co-operate cordially with her and with France in a settlement of the affairs of South-Eastern Europe. That co-operation, in itself a phenomenon of high diplomatic significance, was in a fair way of achieving its object when Canning's premature death (1827) deprived the new and promising machinery of its mainspring. Owing to untimely scruples of the Duke of Wellington England lost all the fruits of the astute and far-seeing diplomacy of Canning; the effectiveness of the Concert of Europe was destroyed, and Russia was left free to deal as she would with the Porte and to dictate the terms of a Treaty, which, by the Duke's own admission, 'sounded the death-knell of the Ottoman Empire in Europe'. But although the Treaty of Adrianople represented a brilliant success for Russian policy at Constantinople, Great Britain was able to exercise a decisive influence on the settlement of the Hellenic question. By the Treaty of London (1832) Greece was established as an independent kingdom, under the protection of Great Britain, Russia, and France.

The tale of the Sultan's embarrassments was not completed by the Treaties of Adrianople and London. The independence of Greece had not only made a serious inroad upon the integrity of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, but had precipitated a disastrous conflict with Russia. Worse still, the effort to avert the disruption of his Empire had induced the

Sultan to seek the assistance of an over-mighty vassal. If there is anything in politics more dangerous than to confer a favour it is to accept one. Mehemet Ali, the brilliant Albanian adventurer, who had made himself Pasha of Egypt, would, but for the intervention of the Powers, have restored Greece to the Sultan. The island of Crete seemed to the vassal an inadequate reward for the service rendered to his Suzerain. Nor was the revelation of Ottoman weakness and incompetence lost upon him. He began to aspire to an independent rule in Egypt; to the pashalik of Syria; perhaps to the lordship of Constantinople itself. The attempt to realize these ambitions kept Europe in a state of almost continuous apprehension and unrest for ten years (1831–41), and opened another chapter in the development of the Eastern Question.

To save himself from Mehemet Ali, the Sultan appealed to the Powers. Russia alone responded to the appeal, and as a reward for her services imposed upon the Porte the humiliating Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi (1833). By the terms of that Treaty Russia became virtually mistress of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. The Tsar bound himself to render unlimited assistance to the Porte by land and sea, and in return the Sultan undertook to close the Straits to the ships of war of all nations, while permitting free egress to the Russian fleet. To all intents and purposes the Sultan had become the vassal of the Tsar.

Thus far England, as a whole, had betrayed little or no jealousy of Russian advance towards the Mediterranean. Canning, though not unfriendly to Russia, had indeed repudiated, and with success, her claim to an exclusive or even a preponderant influence over Turkey. By the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi that claim was virtually admitted. Russia had established a military protectorate over the European dominions of the Sultan.

The Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi inaugurates yet another phase in the evolution of the Eastern Question. From that time down to the Treaty of Berlin (1878), the primary factor in the problem is found in the increasing mistrust and antagonism between Great Britain and Russia. Lord

Palmerston, inheriting the diplomatic traditions of Pitt and Canning, deeply resented the establishment of a Russian protectorate over Turkey, and determined that, at the first opportunity, the Treaty in which it was embodied should be torn up. Torn up it was by the Treaties of London (1840 and 1841), under which the collective protectorate of the Western Powers was substituted for the exclusive protectorate of Russia. After 1841 the Russian claim was never successfully reasserted.

That Great Britain had a vital interest in the development of events in South-Eastern Europe was frankly acknowledged by Russia, and the Tsar Nicholas I made two distinct efforts to come to terms with Great Britain. The first was made in the course of the Tsar's visit to the Court of St. James's in 1844; the second occurred on the eve of the Crimean War, when the Tsar made specific though informal proposals to Sir Hamilton Seymour, then British Ambassador at St. Petersburg. Neither attempt bore fruit. The overtures were based upon the assumption that the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire was imminent, and that it was the duty, as well as the obvious interest, of the Powers most closely concerned to come to an understanding as to the disposition of the estate. British statesmen refused to admit the accuracy of the Tsar's diagnosis, and questioned the propriety of the treatment prescribed. The 'sick man' had still, in their opinion, a fair chance of recovery, and to arrange, before his demise, for a partition of his inheritance seemed to them beyond the bounds of diplomatic decency. Lord Palmerston, in particular, was at once profoundly mistrustful of the designs of Russia, and singularly hopeful as to the possibilities of redemption for the Ottoman Empire. The advances of the Tsar were therefore rather curtly declined.

However distasteful the Tsar's proposals may have been to the moral sense or the political prejudices of British statesmen, it cannot be denied that they were of high intrinsic significance. Had they found general acceptance—an extravagant assumption—the Crimean War would never have been fought; Russia would have become virtually supreme

in the Balkans and over the Straits, while England would have established herself in Egypt and Crete. The refusal of the Aberdeen Cabinet even to consider such suggestions formed one of the proximate causes of the Crimean War.

That war, for good or evil, registered a definite set-back to the policy of Russia in the Near East. It has, indeed, become fashionable to assume that, at any rate as regards the British Empire, the war was a blunder if not a crime. How far that assumption is correct is still an open question. But the Crimean War did at any rate give the Sultan an opportunity to put his house in order, had he desired to do so. For twenty years he was relieved of all anxiety on the side of Russia. The event proved that the Sultan's zeal for reform was in direct ratio to his anxiety for self-preservation. To relieve him from the one was to remove the only incentive to the other. Consequently, his achievements in the direction of internal reform fell far short of his professions.

Little or nothing was done to ameliorate the lot of the subject populations, and in the third quarter of the nineteenth century those populations began to take matters into their own hands. Crete, the 'Great Greek Island', had been indeed in a state of perpetual revolt ever since, in 1840, it had been replaced under the direct government of the Sultan. In 1875 the unrest spread to the peninsula. It was first manifested among the mountaineers of the Herzegovina; thence it spread to their kinsmen in Bosnia and Serbia and Montenegro. The insurrection among the Southern Slavs in the West found an echo among the Bulgars in the East. The Sultan then let loose his Bashi-Bazouks among the Bulgarian peasantry, and all Europe was made to ring with the tale of the atrocities which ensued. The Powers could not stand aside and let the Turk work his will upon his Christian subjects, but mutual jealousy prevented joint action, and in 1877 Russia was compelled to act alone.

An arduous but decisive campaign brought her within striking distance of Constantinople, and enabled her to dictate to the Porte the Treaty of San Stephano. The terms of that famous Treaty were highly displeasing, not only to

Austria and Great Britain, but to the Greeks and Serbians, whose ambitions in Macedonia were frustrated by the creation of a Greater Bulgaria. Great Britain therefore demanded that the Treaty should be submitted to a European Congress. Russia, after considerable demur, assented. Bismarck undertook to act as the 'honest broker' between the parties, and terms were ultimately arranged under his presidency at Berlin. The Treaty of Berlin (1878) ushers in yet another phase in the evolution of the Eastern Question.

The Treaty of Berlin is generally regarded as a great landmark in the history of the Eastern Question. In some respects it is; but its most important features were not those with which its authors were best pleased, or most concerned. They were preoccupied by the relations between the Sultan and the Tsar, and by the interest of Europe in defining those relations. The enduring significance of the treaty is to be found elsewhere: not in the remnant of the Ottoman Empire snatched from the brink of destruction by Lord Beaconsfield, but in the new nations which were arising upon the ruins of that empire—nations which may look back to the 13th of July, 1878, if not as their birthday, at least as the date on which their charters of emancipation were signed and sealed.

Long before 1878 it had become clear that the ultimate solution of an historic problem could not be reached in disregard of the aspirations and claims of the indigenous inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula. The Slavs and Bulgars were indeed only in one degree more indigenous than the Turks themselves. Roumans, Albanians, and Greeks might claim by a more ancient title. But all alike had been established in the lands they still continue to inhabit at any rate many years before the advent of the alien Asiatic power. For centuries, however, all, save the hillsmen of Albania and the Black Mountain, had been more or less completely submerged under the Ottoman flood. When the tide turned and the flood gave signs of receding, the ancient nationalities again emerged. The rebirth of Greece, Roumania, Serbia, and Bulgaria represents in itself one of the most remarkable

and one of the most characteristic movements in the political history of the nineteenth century. Incidentally it introduced an entirely new factor, and one of the highest significance, into the already complex problem of the Near East. The principle of nationality is itself confessedly elusive. But whatever may be its essential ingredients we must admit that the principle has asserted itself with peculiar force in the Balkan peninsula. Nor have the peoples of Western Europe been slow to manifest their sympathy with this new and interesting development. The official attitude of Great Britain during the critical years 1875–8 might seem to have committed the English people to the cause of reaction and Turkish misgovernment. Whatever may have been the motives which inspired the policy of Lord Beaconsfield it is far from certain that, in effect, it did actually obstruct the development of the Balkan nationalities. Two of them, at any rate, have reason to cherish the memory of the statesman who tore up the Treaty of San Stephano. Had that Treaty been allowed to stand, both Greece and Serbia would have had to renounce their ambitions in Macedonia, while the enormous accessions of territory which it secured for Bulgaria might ultimately have proved, even to her, a doubtful political advantage.

Since 1878 the new nations of the Balkans have found their political feet. For their independence they are indebted to no single Power; they are under no exclusive protection; each is free to shape its own political destiny in consonance with its peculiar genius.

Many difficult problems remain. The German-Magyar alliance for the suppression of the Southern Slavs and the retention of the Roumanian populations of Transylvania and Bukovina; the Albanian fiasco now patent to the world; the jealousy between Serbian and Bulgarian, and between Bulgarian and Greek; the unfulfilled ambitions of Roumania; the partially realized hopes of Greece; the existence of an Italy still unredeemed; above all, the survival of a remnant of the Ottoman Empire, still entrenched, however precariously, in the ancient capital with its incom-

parable position and its ineffaceable prestige—these are problems, the solution of which will demand the most delicate diplomacy and the highest statesmanship.

But these problems, difficult and important as they are, seem, for the moment, to be overshadowed by another, the discussion of which will form the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII

THE PROBLEM OF THE NEAR EAST (II): A NEW FACTOR

'Ce qui modifie l'évolution de la question d'Orient, ce qui bouleverse complètement les données du problème et par conséquent sa solution possible, c'est la position nouvelle prise par l'Allemagne dans l'Empire ottoman. . . . Hier, l'influence de l'empereur allemand à Constantinople n'était rien, aujourd'hui elle est tout; silencieusement ou avec éclat, elle joue un rôle prépondérant dans tout ce qui se fait en Turquie.'—ANDRÉ CHÉRADAME (1903).

'I never take the trouble even to open the mail-bag from Constantinople.' 'The whole of the Balkans is not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier.'—PRINCE BISMARCK.

'The 300,000,000 Mohammedans who, dwelling dispersed throughout the East, reverence in H.M. the Sultan Abdul Hamid their Khalif, may rest assured that at all times the German Emperor will be their friend.'—Speech of the German Emperor at Damascus in 1898.

THE Eastern Question, like the Irish Question, assumes different shapes at different times. Now it is the Turks; now it is Russia; now Greece, and now Macedonia. But down to the last decade of the nineteenth century no one ever imagined that the primary factor in the problem would ever be supplied by Germany. In 1889, however, the far-sighted might have perceived a new portent in the Eastern sky. On November 1 of that year the German Imperial yacht, the *Hohenzollern*, steamed through the Dardanelles with the Emperor William and his Empress on board. They were on their way to pay their first ceremonial visit to a European capital and a European sovereign.[1] The capital selected for this distinguished honour was Constantinople; the ruler was the Sultan Abdul Hamid.

It was precisely seven hundred years, as the German colony in Constantinople reminded their sovereign, since a German

[1] The Emperor and Empress had recently attended the marriage at Athens of the present King and Queen of Greece.

emperor had first set foot in the imperial city. But Frederick Barbarossa had come sword in hand; the Emperor William came as the apostle of peace; as the harbinger of economic penetration; almost in the guise of a commercial traveller. The reception accorded to him in Constantinople was in every way worthy of a unique occasion; he and his Empress were the recipients not only of the grossest flattery but of superb and costly gifts. But such attentions were not bestowed without the hope of reward. Sultan Abdul Hamid was one of the shrewdest diplomatists that ever ruled the Ottoman Empire. He was well aware that the State visit of the Emperor and Empress to Constantinople meant the introduction of a new factor into an immemorial problem. 'The East is waiting for a man.' So spake the Emperor William ten years later. His advent was foreshadowed in 1889. Rarely has a ceremonial visit been productive of consequences more important.

The ostentatious advances thus made by the Emperor William to Abdul Hamid marked an entirely new departure in Hohenzollern policy. From the death of Frederick the Great until the advent of Bismarck Berlin took its cue, as regards the politics of the Near East for the most part, from Vienna. During the first ten years of his official career Bismarck was far too much occupied in fighting Denmark, Austria, the Germanic Confederation, and France to pay much heed to the Eastern Question, even had the question been acute. But, as a fact, the years between 1861 and 1871 coincided with one of the rare periods of its comparative quiescence. Yet Bismarck lost no opportunity of turning the Near East to account as a convenient arena in which to reward the services of friends or to assuage the disappointment of temporary opponents without expense to Prussian pockets or detriment to Prussian interests. Consequently he deliberately encouraged the *Drang nach Osten*, which, from 1866 onwards, became a marked feature of Habsburg policy. Venice had been promised to Italy as the price of her assistance in the Seven Weeks' War, but Istria and Dalmatia were, with Bismarck's cordial concurrence, retained by the Habsburgs. Thus did the Prussian Chancellor conciliate a temporary enemy and a potential ally.

Four years later he took the opportunity of rewarding the services of a constant friend. The Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris were, in 1870, torn up in favour of Russia. That transaction was not, of course, inspired entirely by benevolence towards Russia. Bismarck's supreme object was to keep Russia at arm's length from France, and, what was at the moment more important, from England. Nothing was more likely to conduce to this end than to encourage the pretensions of Russia in the Near East, and, indeed, the Farther East. The Black Sea served his purpose in 1870; the 'Penjdeh incident' was similarly utilized in 1885.

Another critical situation arose in 1877. Since 1872 the *Dreikaiserbund* had formed the pivot of Bismarck's foreign policy. But the interests of two out of the three Emperors were now in sharp conflict in the Balkans. It is true that in July 1876 the Emperors of Russia and Austria had met at Reichstadt, and that the Emperor Francis Joseph had agreed to give the Tsar a free hand in the Balkans on condition that Bosnia and the Herzegovina were guaranteed to Austria. But by 1878 Russia was in occupation of Bulgaria and Roumelia, and in less complaisant mood than in 1876; an immense impulse had been given to the idea of Pan-Slavism by recent events; the Southern Slavs were beginning to dream of the possibility of a Jugo-Slav Empire in the west of the peninsula. Bosnia and Herzegovina might easily slip, under the new circumstances, from Austria's grip; the *Drang nach Osten* might receive a serious set-back; the road to the Aegean might be finally barred; even access to the Adriatic might be endangered. Thus Bismarck had virtually to choose between his two friends. At the Berlin Congress he played, as we saw, the rôle of the 'honest broker'. For aught he cared Russia might go to Constantinople, a move which would have the advantage of embroiling her with England; but Austria must have Bosnia and the Herzegovina. Austria got them, and the road to Salonika was kept open.

Apart from any sinister design on the part of a 'Mittel-Europa' party in Germany or Austria-Hungary there was a great deal to be said for the arrangement. Not least from the

English point of view. To the England of 1878 Russia was the enemy, Pan-Slavism the bugbear. An Austrian wedge thrust into the heart of the Balkan peoples, now rising to the dignity of nationhood under Russian protection, was, as Lord Beaconsfield thought, distinctly advantageous to equilibrium in the Near East. To the fate of the Balkan nationalities Lord Beaconsfield was indifferent. Even from a selfish point of view it is now possible to view the matter in a clearer light. We can perceive that 'the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina . . . was the prelude to the attempted strangulation of Serbian nationality';[1] and we can see also that the strangulation of that nationality was an essential preliminary to the realization of Central European ambitions in the Balkan Peninsula.

In the future of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire Bismarck took as little interest as Lord Beaconsfield. It is said that on the morrow of the signature of the Treaty of Berlin Bismarck sent for the Turkish representatives and said: 'Well, gentlemen, you ought to be very much pleased; we have secured you a respite of twenty years; you have got that period of grace in which to put your house in order. It is probably the last chance the Ottoman Empire will get, and of one thing I'm pretty sure—you won't take it.' The story may be apocryphal, but it accords well enough with Bismarck's sardonic humour.

Prince Gortchakoff never forgave his pupil for the rupture of the *Dreikaiserbund*. Russia and Germany drifted farther apart; and in 1882 Bismarck formed a fresh diplomatic combination. Italy joined Germany and Austria in the Triple Alliance; and, a year later, the Hohenzollern King of Roumania was introduced into the firm as 'a sleeping partner'. The 'Battenberger', who reigned at Sofia, was no favourite at Berlin, but the election of a 'Coburger' to the Bulgarian throne in 1887 decidedly strengthened Teutonic influence in the Balkans.

Bismarck, however, to the end of his career, regarded Balkan politics as outside the immediate sphere of Berlin. Ten years

[1] Professor Ch. Andler, *Pan-Germanism*—a brilliant summary.

he had devoted to the task of creating a united Germany under the hegemony of Prussia. The next twenty were given to the consolidation of the position he had acquired. But Bismarck's course was nearly run. In 1888 the direction of German policy passed into other hands. Like his great-great-uncle, George III, the young Emperor William mounted his throne determined 'to be king'. In the English executive there was no room for both George III and the elder Pitt; Pitt had to go. In the higher command of German politics there was no room for William II and Bismarck; the pilot was soon dropped.

The young Emperor was by no means alone in his anxiety to initiate a new departure in the Near East. The visit to Constantinople in 1889 was the first overt intimation to the diplomatic world of the breach between the young Emperor and his veteran Chancellor. The mission of Bismarck was, in the eyes of the younger generation, already accomplished. The past belonged to him, the future to the emperor. 'Bismarck', wrote one of the younger school, 'merely led us to the threshold of German regeneration.'[1]

The man who more than any one else persuaded the Kaiser to the new enterprise, and in particular to the effusive demonstration of 1889, was Count Hatzfeld, who had been German ambassador to the Sublime Porte in the early 'eighties. Count Hatzfeld was quick to perceive, during his residence in Turkey, that there was a vacancy at Constantinople. From the days of Suleiman the Magnificent down to the first Napoleonic Empire, France, as we have seen, occupied a unique position at Constantinople. From the beginning of the nineteenth century that position was threatened by England, and from the days of Canning to those of Beaconsfield England was a fairly constant and successful suitor for the *beaux yeux* of the Sultan. England's popularity at Constantinople did not long survive the conclusion of the Cyprus Convention (1878). It was further impaired by Mr. Gladstone's return to power in 1880. Mr. Gladstone was the recognized friend not of the Turks but of the 'subject peoples'; and his accession to office was signalized by the rectification of the Greek frontier at the

[1] F. Lange, *Reines Deutschtum*, p. 210 (quoted by Andler, *op. cit.*, p. 23).

expense of the Porte in 1881. The occupation of Egypt (1882) was the final blow to a traditional friendship.

The vacancy thus created at Constantinople the young German Emperor determined to fill. The way had been prepared for his advent in characteristic Prussian fashion. Von Moltke had been sent on a mission to Constantinople as far back as 1841, and had formed and expressed very clear views on the situation he found there. Forty years later a military mission was dispatched from Berlin to avert, if possible, the disruption which Moltke had prophesied. The head of the mission was the great soldier-scholar who, in 1916, laid down his life in the Caucasus. Twelve long years did Baron von der Goltz devote to the task of reorganizing the Turkish army, and the results of his teaching were brilliantly demonstrated in the brief but decisive war with Greece in 1897. In the wake of Prussian soldiers went German traders and German financiers. A branch of the Deutsche Bank of Berlin was established in Constantinople, while German commercial travellers penetrated into every corner of the Ottoman Empire. The contemporary situation was thus diagnosed by a brilliant French journalist: 'Dans ce combat commercial l'Allemagne poursuit l'offensive, l'Angleterre reste sur la défensive et la France commence à capituler.' The same writer further suggests reasons for the phenomenal success of the German traders: even ambassadors do not deem it beneath their dignity to assist by diplomatic influence the humblest as well as the greatest commercial enterprises; consular agents abroad keep the manufacturers at home constantly and precisely informed as to demands of customers, and above all the German manufacturer is adaptable and teachable. Instead of attempting to force upon the consumer something which he does not want—'l'article démodé'—he supplies him with the exact article which he does want. And what the Eastern generally does want to-day is something cheap and nasty. The result may be learnt from a conversation with a typical Turk recorded by the same writer:

'Mon grand-père a acheté sa sacoche à un Français; il l'a payée deux livres; elle était en cuir. Mon père l'a achetée

à un Anglais ; il l'a payée une livre ; elle était en toile cirée. Moi, je l'ai achetée à un Allemand ; je l'ai payée deux medjidiés (huit francs) ; elle est en carton verni.'[1]

If German diplomatists have not disdained to act as commercial agents they have only followed a still more exalted example. The commercial aspect of the question did not escape the shrewd eyes of the Emperor in 1889.

The second visit paid by the Emperor to the Sultan, in 1898, was even more productive in this respect. But the promotion of the commercial interests of Germany was not its primary object. The moment was chosen with incomparable felicity. No crowned head ever stood more desperately in need of a friend of unimpeachable respectability than did Abdul Hamid in the year 1898.

For the last four years Christendom had been resounding with the cries of the Armenian Christians, butchered in their thousands to make a Sultan's holiday. The story of the Armenian massacres has been told by many competent pens. Pamphlets, articles in contemporary reviews, political speeches, and substantial volumes go to make up a vast literature on the subject.[2] Not the least impressive account is that which is to be found in the papers presented to Parliament in 1895 and 1896.[3] Stripped of all exaggeration and rhetoric, the story is one of the most horrible, and, for the Christian nations, the most humiliating in the long history of the Eastern Question. Some parts of the story are still obviously incomplete ; much of it is obscure ; the whole of it is difficult and confusing. But the points essential to our present purpose emerge with terrible distinctness.

The Armenian Church is the oldest of all the national churches, having been founded by St. Gregory the Illuminator in the third century. It is not in communion with the

[1] Gaulis, *La Ruine d'un Empire*, p. 143.

[2] Cf., e.g., Lord Bryce, *Transcaucasia* (1896) ; E. M. Bliss, *Turkey and the Armenian Atrocities* (1896) ; W. E. Gladstone, *The Armenian Question* (1905) ; H. F. B. Lynch, *Armenia : Travels and Studies*, 2 vols. (1901) ; Saint-Martin, *Mémoire historique et géographique sur l'Arménie* (Paris, 1818).

[3] Under the head of *Turkey*.

Orthodox Greek Church; its appeals, therefore, have always left the Russians cold; and only since the abandonment of the monophysite heresy in the fifteenth century has a portion of the Armenian Church been accepted as 'Catholic'. Armenia itself is an ill-defined geographical area lying between the Caspian, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, and Kurdistan, partitioned between the Empires of Russia, Turkey, and Persia. But while 'Armenia' has no official geographical existence in the gazetteer of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians have been for centuries among the most important sections of Turkish society. 'To the Albanians the sword; to the Armenians belongs the pen.' The familiar proverb indicates with sufficient accuracy their characteristic place and function. These 'Christian Jews', as they have been called, are apt, above all other subjects of the Sultan, in all that pertains to money and finance. Bankers, financiers, and merchants in the higher grades of society; money-changers and hucksters in the lower, they have performed a useful function in the Ottoman Empire, and many of them have amassed large fortunes. Wealth acquired by finance has, it would seem, in Turkey as elsewhere, a peculiarly exasperating effect upon those who do not share it, and the Armenian Christians have always excited a considerable amount of odium even in the cosmopolitan society of Constantinople. Still, it is only within the last quarter of a century that their lot has been rendered unbearable.

Three reasons must be held mainly responsible for the peculiar ferocity with which the Armenians were assailed by Abdul Hamid: the unrest among hitherto docile subjects caused by the nationalist movements in Bosnia, Serbia, and Bulgaria; the intervention of the European Powers; and, not least, the palpable jealousies and dissensions by which the Powers were mutually distracted. The primary motive which animated Abdul Hamid was not fanaticism but fear. Greeks, Roumanians, Serbians, and Bulgarians; one after another they had asserted their independence, and the Ottoman Empire was reduced to a mere shadow of its former self. That these events had caused unrest among the Armenians, even though

Armenia was not, like Roumania or Bulgaria, a geographical entity, it would be idle to deny. Abdul Hamid was terrified.

He was also irritated. The Powers had interested themselves in the lot of the Armenians. Article LXI of the Treaty of Berlin ran as follows:

'The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds.

'It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application.'

If the Powers in general were disposed to interfere, Great Britain, in particular, had imposed a special obligation upon the Sultan, and had herself assumed a peculiar responsibility. The first Article of the Cyprus Convention contained, it will be remembered, a promise, a condition, and a territorial deposit:

'If', it ran, 'Batoum, Ardahan, Kars, or any of them shall be retained by Russia, and if any attempt shall be made at any future time by Russia to take possession of any further territories of his Imperial Majesty the Sultan in Asia, as fixed by the Definitive Treaty of Peace, England engages to join his Imperial Majesty the Sultan in defending them by force of arms.

'In return, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan promises to England to introduce necessary reforms, to be agreed upon later between the two Powers, into the government, and for the protection, of the Christian and other subjects of the Porte in these territories; and in order to enable England to make necessary provision for executing her engagement, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan further consents to assign the Island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England.'

From 1878 onwards the Sultan lived, therefore, under the perpetual apprehension of intervention, while his Armenian subjects could repose in the comfortable assurance that they were under the special protection of their fellow Christians throughout the world. Gradually, however, it dawned upon the shrewd Sultan that the apprehension was groundless, while

the miserable Armenians were soon to discover that the assurance was not worth the paper upon which it was written.

If the Sultan was frightened, so also was the Tsar, Alexander III. The Nihilist spectre was always before his eyes. His father, the emancipator of the serfs, had fallen a victim to a Nihilist conspiracy in 1881. Nihilism had shown itself among the Turkish Armenians, and had led to an outbreak, easily suppressed, in 1885. Bulgaria, too, had proved a terrible disappointment to Russia. After being called into being by the Tsar it was manifesting its independence in most disquieting fashion. Instead of opening the way for Russia to Constantinople, Bulgaria, with unaccountable forgetfulness of past favours, was actually closing it. 'We don't want an Armenian Bulgaria,' said the Russian Chancellor, Prince Lobanoff. If the road to Constantinople were closed, all the more reason for keeping open the roads to Bagdad and Teheran. Nothing could be more inconvenient to the Tsar than a 'nationality' movement in Armenia. The Tsar's disposition was well known at Constantinople, and the Sultan soon drew the inference that, if he chose to work his will upon the Armenians, he had little to fear from St. Petersburg. He had much less to fear from Berlin; while Paris and London were kept apart by Egypt.

Here, then, was an opportunity; nor was it neglected. The Powers should be taught the imprudence of intervening between an Ottoman Sultan and his rightful subjects; the Armenians should learn—or the remnant of them who escaped extermination—that they had better trust to the tender mercies of their own sovereign than confide in the assurances of the European Concert. Abdul Hamid's crafty calculations were precisely fulfilled. In the year 1893 there seems to have been some recrudescence, among the Armenians, of the revolutionary propaganda which had been suppressed in 1885. The Kurds, half-publicans, half-police, wholly irregulars, were encouraged to extort more and more taxes from the Armenian highlanders. The Armenians forcibly, and in some cases effectually, resisted their demands. Supported by Turkish regulars, the Kurds were then bidden to stamp out the insur-

rection in blood. They carried out their orders to the letter. Whole villages were wiped out; the cry of the victims rose to heaven; the Powers looked on in impotence; the 'red Sultan' was gleeful, but his appetite for blood was even yet unsated.

In August 1896 the interest of the scene shifted from Armenia to Constantinople. On the 26th the Armenians of the capital, frenzied by the appeals of their brethren in Armenia, and despairing of help from the Powers, rose in rebellion, and attacked and captured the Ottoman Bank in Galata. Something desperate must be done to make the world listen. But the recoil upon their own heads was immediate and terrible. Within the next twenty-four hours 6,000 Armenians were bludgeoned to death in the streets of the capital. But though the aggregate was appalling the Sultan was precise and discriminating in his methods. Only Gregorian Armenians were butchered; hardly a Catholic was touched.[1] In Constantinople the Armenians were the aggressors; the Turks were plainly within their rights in suppressing armed insurrection; the Powers could only, as before, look on; but they did not feel disposed to effusive cordiality. The Sultan's hand reeked with the blood of the Armenians. No respectable sovereign could grasp it without loss of self-respect. That consideration did not deter the German Emperor. The more socially isolated the Sultan the greater his gratitude for a mark of disinterested friendship.

In the midst of the massacres it was forthcoming. On the Sultan's birthday, in 1896, there arrived a present from Berlin. It was carefully selected to demonstrate the intimacy of the relations which subsisted between the two Courts, almost, one might say, the two families; its intrinsic value was small, but the moral consolation which it brought to the recipient must have been inestimable: it consisted of a signed photograph of the emperor and empress surrounded by their sons. That was in 1896. In 1897 came the Turco-Greek War. The success of von der Goltz's pupils in Thessaly

[1] Eliot, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

afforded a natural excuse for a congratulatory visit on the part of von der Goltz's master to Constantinople.

In 1898 the visit was paid; but it was not confined to the Bosphorus. From Constantinople the German Emperor, accompanied by the Empress, went on to the Holy Land.

The pilgrimage, which was personally conducted by Messrs. Thomas Cook & Co.,[1] extended from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem back to Damascus. The avowed purpose of the emperor's visit to the Holy Land was the inauguration of a Protestant Church at Jerusalem. Down to 1886 the Protestant bishop in Palestine was appointed in turn by England and by Prussia, though the bishop was under the jurisdiction of the See of Canterbury. The German Protestants have, however, shown remarkable activity in mission work in Palestine, and the emperor's visit was intended primarily to set the seal of imperial approval upon these activities and to mark the emancipation of the German mission from Anglican control. But the German Emperor is lord not only of Protestants but of Catholics. To the Catholics also in the Holy Land he gave proof, therefore, of his special favour. Nor must the Moslems be ignored. True, he could not count many Moslems among his own subjects as yet. But who knew what the future might have in store? At Jerusalem Protestants and Catholics had claimed attention. But the emperor, as M. Gaulis wittily observed, varied his parts as quickly as he changed his uniforms. At Damascus he was an under-study for the Khalif, and the Mohammedans got their turn. Of all the emperor's speeches that which he delivered at Damascus, just before quitting the Holy Land, on November 8, 1898, was perhaps the most sensational. It contained these words: 'His Majesty the Sultan Abdul Hamid, and the three hundred million Mohammedans who reverence him as Khalif, may rest assured

[1] 'Des caisses, des malles, des sacs portant l'inscription "Voyage de S.M. l'empereur d'Allemagne à Jérusalem; Thos. Cook & Co." Deux royautés dans une phrase. Celle de Cook est incontestée en Palestine.' —Gaulis, in whose work, *La Ruine d'un Empire*, pp. 156–242, will be found an entertaining and illuminating account by an eye-witness of the Kaiser's pilgrimage.

that at all times the German Emperor will be their friend.' Well might those who listened to this audacious utterance hold their breath. Was it intoxication or cool calculation?

'Ceux qui ont vu, comme moi,' writes M. Gaulis, 'le pèlerin et son cortège dans leurs trois avatars successifs: protestant, catholique et musulman, restent un peu abasourdis sur le rivage. Quel est le sens de cette grande habileté qui, voulant faire à chacun sa part, jette un défi aux passions religieuses de l'Orient? L'Allemagne, nous le savons bien, est venue tard dans la politique orientale. Comme toutes les places y étaient prises elle a jugé qu'elles étaient toutes bonnes à prendre. Elle s'est mise alors à jouer le rôle d'essayiste, tâtant le terrain de tous les côtés, guettant toutes les proies et ouvrant la succession des vivants avec une audace souvent heureuse. Mais ce n'est plus de l'audace, c'est de la candeur, tant le jeu en est transparent, lorsqu'elle offre dans la même quinzaine un hommage à Jésus-Christ et un autre à Saladin, un sanctuaire à l'Eglise évangélique et un autre au pape.'

But if Frenchmen marvelled at the audacity of the performance, other reflections occurred to the applauding Germans. Among those who were present at the banquet at Damascus was Dr. Friedrich Naumann, the author of a work which has to-day made his name famous throughout the world.[1] Side by side with the impressions of the French publicist it is instructive to read those of the German philosopher. Dr. Naumann discerned in the emperor's speech a secret calculation of 'grave and remote possibilities'.

(1) 'It is possible that the Caliph of Constantinople may fall into the hands of the Russians. Then there would perhaps be an Arab Caliph, at Damascus or elsewhere, and it would be advantageous to be known not only as the friend of the Sultan, but as the friend of all Mahometans. The title might give the German Emperor a measure of political power, which might be used to counteract a Russophil Ottoman policy.

(2) 'It is possible that the world war will break out before the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. Then the Caliph of Constantinople would once more uplift the Standard of a Holy War. The Sick Man would raise himself for the last time to shout to Egypt, the Soudan, East Africa, Persia,

[1] *Mitteleuropa*, by Friedrich Naumann (Berlin, 1915; Eng. trans., London, 1916).

Afghanistan, and India "War against England". . . . It is not unimportant to know who will support him on his bed when he rises to utter this cry.'

But the Kaiser had not undertaken a personal mission to the Near East merely to patronize the disciples of various creeds in the Holy Land; nor even to congratulate his friend Abdul Hamid upon a partial extermination of the Armenians. His sojourn at Constantinople coincided with the concession of the port of Haidar-Pasha to the 'German Company of Anatolian Railways'.

That concession was supremely significant. German diplomacy in the Near East has been from first to last largely 'railway-diplomacy', and not its least important field has been Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. The idea of directing German capital and German emigration towards these regions was of long standing. The distinguished economist, Roscher, suggested as far back as 1848 that Asia Minor would be the natural share of Germany in any partition of the Ottoman Empire. After 1870 the idea became more prevalent and more precisely defined. In 1880 a commercial society was founded in Berlin, with a capital of fifty million marks, to promote the 'penetration' of Asia Minor. Kiepert, the prince of cartographers, was employed systematically to survey the country. About 1886 Dr. Anton Sprenger, the orientalist, and other savants called attention to the favourable opening for German colonization in these regions.

'The East is the only territory in the world which has not passed under the control of one of the ambitious nations of the globe. Yet it offers the most magnificent field for colonization, and if Germany does not allow this opportunity to escape her, if she seizes this domain before the Cossacks lay hands upon it, she will have secured the best share in the partition of the earth. The German Emperor would have the destinies of Nearer Asia in his power if some hundreds of thousands of armed colonists were cultivating these splendid plains; he might and would be the guardian of peace for all Asia.'[1]

[1] Quoted by Andler, *op. cit.*, p. 40. A. Sprenger, *Babylonien das reichste Land in der Vorzeit und das lohnendste Kolonisationsfeld für die Gegenwart* (1886).

Ten years later the Pan-German League published a brochure with the suggestive title: *Germany's Claim to the Turkish Inheritance*, and in the editorial manifesto wrote as follows:

'As soon as events shall have brought about the dissolution of Turkey, no power will make any serious objections if the German Empire claims her share of it. This is her right as a World-Power, and she needs such a share far more than the other Great Powers because of the hundreds of thousands of her subjects who emigrate, and whose nationality and economic subsistence she must preserve.'[1]

The field in Asia Minor was open to them alike for commercial penetration and railway construction. But it was not for lack of warning on the part of clear-sighted Englishmen. The question of establishing a steam route to the Persian Gulf and India by way of Mesopotamia had been again and again raised in this country. In the early 'forties the fashionable idea was the establishment of steam navigation up the Euphrates; in 1856 a private company did actually obtain a concession from the Porte for the construction of a line of railway from the mouth of the Syrian Orontes to Koweit, but the scheme was insufficiently supported and never materialized; a committee of the House of Commons reported favourably upon a similar scheme in 1872, but the report was coldly received in Parliament; finally, an abortive Euphrates Valley Association was formed in 1879 under the presidency of the Duke of Sutherland. But after 1880 attention in this country was concentrated upon Egypt and the Canal route; naturally, but in so far as it excluded consideration of the alternative possibilities of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, with very questionable wisdom.[2]

England's indifference was Germany's opportunity. In 1880 an Anglo-Greek syndicate had obtained from the Porte certain rights for railway construction in Asia Minor; in 1888 all these rights were transferred on much more favourable terms

[1] Quoted by Andler, *op. cit.*, p. 38. See also Chéradame, *La Question d'Orient*, pp. 5–7.

[2] Cf. a most informing article by Mr. D. G. Hogarth, *National Review*, vol. xxxix, pp. 462–73, or *Quarterly Review* for Oct. 1917.

to the Deutsche Bank of Berlin and the Württembergische Vereinsbank of Stuttgart, and in 1889 the Ottoman Company of Anatolian Railways was promoted under the same auspices. Further concessions were obtained between that time and 1902, and in the latter year the convention for the construction of a railway from Constantinople to Bagdad was finally concluded. This railway it need hardly be said was only one link in a much longer chain stretching from Hamburg to Vienna, and thence by way of Buda-Pesth, Belgrade, and Nish to Constantinople, with an ultimate extension from Bagdad to Basra. Thus would Berlin be connected by virtually continuous rail with the Persian Gulf.

It was, and remains, a great conception worthy of a scientific and systematic people. Should it materialize it will turn the flank of the great Sea-Empire, just as, in the fifteenth century, Portugal, by the discovery of the Cape route to India, turned the flank of the Ottoman Turks.

That a line should be constructed from the Bosphorus to the Persian Gulf is in the political and social interests of one of the richest regions of the world; it is in the economic interests of mankind. But there are alternative routes from Western Europe to Constantinople. Not all these routes are controlled from Berlin or even from Vienna.[1] Which of them will ultimately be selected? The answer to this question is one of the many which depend upon the issue of the present War.

For the first twenty years of his reign all went well with the policy of the Kaiser in the Near East. But everything depended upon the personal friendship of the Sultan Abdul Hamid, and upon the stability of his throne. In 1908 his throne was threatened; in 1909 it was overturned. The triumph of the Young Turk revolution imposed a serious check upon German policy; but, to the amazement of European diplomacy, the check proved to be only temporary. Enver Pasha quickly succeeded to the place in the circle of imperial

[1] Cf., for instance, Sir Arthur Evans's exceedingly interesting suggestion of a route via Milan and the Save valley to Constantinople (*The Adriatic Slavs and the Overland Route to Constantinople*).

friendship vacated by his deposed master. Bulgaria finally declared her independence. Bosnia and the Herzegovina were definitely annexed by Austria.

Russia, as the patron of the Southern Slavs, naturally protested; but Russia was not at the moment prepared to accept the challenge of the 'knight in shining armour' at Berlin, and so *Mitteleuropa* took a very important step towards the Aegean.

Few Englishmen were at the time sufficiently alive to the significance of the events of 1908–9. But we have recently learnt from the *Memories* of Lord Redesdale that their significance did not escape the vigilant notice of King Edward. Lord Redesdale happened to be at Balmoral when the news of the Austrian annexations in the Balkans reached the King. 'No one who was there can forget', he says, 'how terribly he was upset. Never did I see him so moved. . . . Every word that he uttered that day has come true.'[1] It is not too much to say that the Great War of 1914 was implicit in the events of 1908.

It now seemed as if one thing and one thing only could interpose a final and effective barrier between the Central Empires and their ambitions in the Near East—a real union between the Balkan States. In the autumn of 1912 that miracle was temporarily achieved and the first Balkan War ensued (October–December 1912). The Allied arms achieved a remarkable triumphs. 'Within the brief space of one month', writes M. Gueshoff, 'the Balkan League demolished the Ottoman Empire, four tiny countries with a population of some 10,000,000 souls defeating a great Power whose inhabitants numbered 25,000,000.' But the victory was too rapid and too complete. Not even the statesmanship of M. Venizelos, backed by that of M. Gueshoff, could, in the face of jarring interests in Macedonia, hold the Balkan League together. The collapse of the Turk was from that point of view inconveniently and indeed disastrously rapid. The union of the Balkan States might have been less transitory if victory over the Turk had been

[1] i. 178-9. Cf. also *The Recollections* (ii. 277) of John Viscount Morley, who was Minister in attendance at the time and formed a similar opinion of the knowledge and shrewdness of King Edward VII.

more difficult to achieve. As it was, Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, having humbled the Ottoman Empire to the dust, took to quarrelling among themselves over spoils which were unexpectedly large.

This was Germany's opportunity and she used it with singular adroitness. The first step was, in the name of an autonomous Albania, to prohibit Serbia's access to the Adriatic. Serbia, deprived of her natural compensation, was consequently thrust southwards towards the Aegean. By the original treaty of partition with Bulgaria (February, 1912) the latter was to have everything to the east of the Rhodope mountains and the river Struma; Serbia was to have the territory to the north and west of the Shar mountains; the intermediate zone was to be divided between them, and Russia was to act as arbitrator. But Serbia, driven from the Adriatic, now asked for the Vardar valley. The Bulgarians, it was urged, had unexpectedly got Thrace, including Adrianople, and could afford, therefore, to be generous on the side of Macedonia. But it was not Thrace, but Macedonia, that Bulgaria had set out to win. She now found herself deprived of Monastir by Serbia, and of Salonika and nearly all the Macedonian coast by Greece. Before the end of June 1913 the allies of 1912 were at each other's throats. Bulgaria's attack upon her allies was, on the admission of M. Gueshoff, 'a criminal act'. It was fitly punished. After a month's fighting Bulgaria, thanks not a little to the timely intervention of Roumania, was brought to her knees. Even more complete than the defeat of Bulgaria was the diplomatic victory of Austro-Germany, and on August 9, 1913, the Treaty of Bucharest was signed.

For the conclusion of peace at Bucharest one Power in Europe took special credit to itself. No sooner was it signed than the Emperor William telegraphed to his cousin, King Carol of Roumania, his hearty congratulations upon the successful issue of his 'wise and truly statesmanlike policy'. 'I rejoice', he added, 'at our mutual co-operation in the cause of peace.' Shortly afterwards King Constantine of Greece received at Potsdam, from the emperor's own hands, the bâton of a Field Marshal in the Prussian army.

If the Kaiser had been active in the cause of peace his august ally at Vienna had done his utmost to enlarge the area of war. On August 9, 1913, the day before the signature of peace, Austria-Hungary communicated to Italy and to Germany 'her intention of taking action against Serbia, and defined such action as defensive, hoping to bring into operation the *casus foederis* of the Triple Alliance'.[1] Italy refused to recognize the proposed aggression of Austria-Hungary against Serbia as a *casus foederis*. Germany also exercised a restraining influence upon her ally, and the attack was consequently postponed; but only for eleven months. Germany was not quite ready: on November 22, however, M. Jules Cambon, the French ambassador at Berlin, reported that the German Emperor had ceased to be 'the champion of peace against the warlike tendencies of certain parties in Germany, and had come to think that war with France was inevitable'.[2]

France, therefore, would have to be fought; but the eyes of the German Powers, and more particularly of Austria-Hungary, were fixed not upon the west but upon the south-east.

Serbia had committed two unpardonable crimes: she had strengthened the barrier between Austria-Hungary and Salonika; and she had enormously enhanced her own prestige as the representative of Jugo-Slav aspirations. Serbia, therefore, must be annihilated.

But Serbia did not stand alone. By her side were Greece and Roumania. The association of these three Balkan States appeared to be peculiarly menacing to the Habsburg Empire. Greece, firmly planted in Salonika, was a fatal obstacle to the hopes so long cherished by Austria. The prestige acquired by Serbia undoubtedly tended to create unrest among the Slavonic peoples still subject to the Dual Monarchy. And if Jugo-Slav enthusiasm threatened the integrity of the Dual Monarchy upon one side, the ambitions of a Greater Roumania threatened it upon another. The visit of the Tsar Nicholas to

[1] Telegram from the Marquis di San Giuliano to Signor Giolitti: quoted by the latter in the Italian Chamber, Dec. 5, 1914 (*Collected Diplomatic Documents*, p. 401).

[2] *Collected Diplomatic Documents*, p. 142.

Constanza in the spring of 1914 was interpreted in Vienna as a recognition of this fact, and as an indication of a *rapprochement* between St. Petersburg and Bucharest.

If, therefore, the menace presented to 'Central Europe' by the first Balkan League had been effectually dissipated, the menace of a second Balkan League remained. One crumb of consolation the second war had, however, brought to the German Powers: the vitality and power of recuperation manifested by the Ottoman Turk. So long as the Turks remained in Constantinople there was no reason for despair. The key of German policy was to be found upon the shores of the Bosphorus.

Constantinople and Salonika were then the dual objectives of Austro-German ambition. Across the path to both of them lay Belgrade. At all hazards the Power which commanded Belgrade must be crushed.

On June 12, 1914, the German Emperor, accompanied by Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, visited the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, at their castle of Konopisht in Bohemia. What passed between the august visitor and his hosts must be matter for conjecture. A responsible writer has, however, given currency to a story that the object of the Emperor William's visit was to provide an inheritance for the two sons of the Duchess of Hohenberg, and at the same time to arrange for the eventual absorption of the German lands of the House of Habsburg into the German Empire.[1] The Archduke Franz Ferdinand was heir to the Dual Monarchy, but his marriage was morganatic, and his children were portionless. Both he and his wife were the objects of incessant intrigue alike at Vienna and at Buda-Pesth, where the archduke was credited with pro-Slav sympathies.

On June 28 the archduke and his wife were assassinated in the streets of the Bosnian capital, Serajevo. None of the usual precautions for the safety of royal visitors had been taken. The assassin though not a Serbian subject was a Serb, but by whom was he employed? No steps were taken to punish

[1] Cf. *The Pact of Konopisht*, by H. Wickham Steed, *Nineteenth Century and After*, February, 1916, but other stories are current.

those who had so grossly neglected the duty of guarding the archduke's person, though the *canaille* of Serajevo were let loose among the Serbs, while the Austrian police stood idly by. The satisfaction which prevailed in certain quarters in Vienna and Buda-Pesth was hardly concealed. Nevertheless, the Serbians were to be chastised for a dastardly crime planned in Belgrade,[1] and accordingly, on July 23, the Austro-Hungarian Government addressed to Serbia an ultimatum which has become historic.

Forty-eight hours only were permitted for a reply to the ultimatum which was communicated, together with an explanatory memorandum, to the Powers, on July 24. Diplomacy, therefore, had only twenty-four hours in which to work. The Serbian Government did its utmost to avert the war, plainly pre-determined by the German Powers. It replied promptly, accepting eight out of the ten principal points and not actually rejecting the other two. No submission could have been more complete and even abject. To complete the evidence of Serbia's conciliatory attitude it is only necessary to recall the fact that she offered to submit the whole question at issue between the two Governments, either to the Hague Tribunal or to the Great Powers which took part in the drawing up of the declaration made by the Serbian Government on the 18th (31st) March, 1909.[2] But nothing could avail to avert war. The German Powers were ready and they had struck.

From the mass of the diplomatic correspondence two almost casual though not insignificant remarks may be unearthed. On July 25, Sir Rennel Rodd, British ambassador at Rome, telegraphed to Sir Edward Grey: 'There is reliable information that Austria intends to seize the Salonika Railway.'[3] On the 29th, the British chargé d'affaires at Constantinople

[1] The Serbian Government challenged proof, never afforded, of its connivance in the crime. It also pointed out that it had previously offered to arrest the assassins, but the Austrian Government had deprecated the precautionary step.

[2] British Diplomatic Correspondence, No. 39, 1914 (*Collected Documents*, p. 31).

[3] *Idem*, No. 19.

telegraphed: 'I understand that the designs of Austria may extend considerably beyond the Sandjak and a punitive occupation of Serbian territory. I gathered this from a remark let fall by the Austrian ambassador here, who spoke of the deplorable economic situation of Salonika under Greek administration, and of the assistance on which the Austrian army could count from Mussulman population discontented with Serbian rule.'[1]

The old and the new Rome were equally awake to the fact that Austria was looking beyond Serbia to Salonika.

Austria declared war upon Serbia on July 28; Germany declared war upon Russia on August 1, and upon France on August 3; Germany invaded Belgium on August 4, and on the same day Great Britain declared war on Germany.

Once more the problem of the Near East, still unsolved, apparently insoluble, had involved the world in war.

[1] *Idem*, No. 82.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PROBLEM OF THE NEAR EAST: (III) THE LATEST PHASE

'The War might have begun from various causes and on many pretexts on the part of Germany, but as a matter of fact it began by reason of the Eastern Question being re-opened.'—PAUL MILYOUKOV.

'The War comes from the East; the War is waged for the East; the War will be decided in the East.'—ERNST JÄCKH in *Deutsche Politik*, Dec. 22, 1916. (Quoted in *The New Europe*, Feb. 8, 1917.)

OF the two texts prefixed to this chapter, the first comes from the pen of one of the greatest of Russian statesmen; the second from that of an eminent German publicist. Whether the present War will be decided on the battle-fields of the West or of the East is a question on which the present writer is not competent to form, nor even to express, an opinion; but it is difficult in the light of recent events to question the soundness of the conclusions at which Dr. Jäckh and the late Foreign Secretary of Russia have severally arrived. The origins of the War are already becoming a matter of academic interest; its full significance is not yet unfolded: but every month that has passed since August 1914 has tended to establish the conclusion maintained by M. André Chéradame and other students of Near Eastern politics, that the clue to the riddle of Hohenzollern ambitions must be sought, and will be found, in the Balkan Peninsula and in the regions of which Belgrade and Constantinople hold the keys.

In the two preceding chapters an attempt has been made to analyse some of the chief factors in the immemorial but kaleidoscopic problem of the Near East. The situation in the East changes, however, with such baffling and bewildering rapidity from year to year, from month to month, almost from day to day, that it may serve a useful purpose to

indicate, with necessary reserve and brevity, the most recent phase which has revealed itself in the evolution of an historic problem.

Of all the factors in the problem that which has recently undergone the most momentous modification is, unquestionably, the Russian. The historical commentator who essays to pass judgement upon contemporary events may well take warning from the example of the greatest of his craft. Burke's *Reflections upon the French Revolution* was published within eighteen months of the meeting of the States-General; long before the work of the Constituent Assembly was completed; long before the fall of the Monarchy and the establishment of the Republic. Instinct with the genius of a great political philosopher; packed with reflections of permanent validity; containing, moreover, some of the most remarkable and sagacious predictions ever hazarded by a commentator upon political affairs, the treatise was manifestly lacking in detailed knowledge of the remoter causes which had produced the outbreak so deeply deplored and so passionately denounced by the author. Burke was biased, too, in his political judgements by over-sensitiveness towards the unhappy fate of individuals. As Tom Paine said: 'he pitied the plumage but forgot the dying bird'. A commentator upon recent events in Russia is apt to fall into a similar error: in justifiable indignation at the conduct of the revolutionary leaders; in bitter appreciation of the lamentable results of their follies and crimes, to lose a sense of historical and political perspective. This I take to be the meaning of the mordant criticism passed upon Burke by Tom Paine; and it is easy to repeat Burke's immediate error, without the compensating advantages derivable from his permanent reflections. Nevertheless, the historian may, without risk, presume to appraise the immediate results of the repercussion of the Russian revolution, the defeat of her armies, the ineptitude of her diplomacy, and the shameless betrayal of her allies, upon the situation in the Near East.

Those results are manifest. Russian history has gone back two hundred and fifty years. The patient labours of Peter

the Great and Catherine II, to say nothing of those of the first Alexander and the first Nicholas, have gone for naught. The crowned protector of the Greek Christians has lost his crown. The head of the Slav family of nations has been driven into exile: the 'little father' of the Russians has been foully murdered by his own subjects. The windows opened by Peter and Catherine upon the Baltic and the Black Sea have been closed. Russia is as completely cut off from all access to European waters (save by the north) as she was in the middle of the seventeenth century. The fruits of a long series of successful treaties concluded between Russia and the Porte—Kutchuck-Kainardji, Jassy, Bucharest, Adrianople, and Unkiar Skelessi—have been at a stroke cancelled. The influence of Russia at Constantinople, gradually acquired, partly by successful war, partly by patient diplomacy, no longer counts. The Black Sea, down to 1774 a Turkish lake, then (except between 1856 and 1871) a Russian lake, is now, to all intents and purposes, a German lake.

'The Black Sea like the Danube will', writes a German publicist, 'be free from Russian, French, and English interference; Russia will no longer touch its coast and disturb the East in the service of England and France. The Black Sea will be entirely encircled by the Quadruple Alliance—to the largest extent by Turkey; secondly by Bulgaria (both of them allies of Germany); further by the Ukraine and by Transcaucasia (both of them protectorates of Germany), and between them by Roumania (Germany's converted ally).'[1]

If we accept this analysis as accurate, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the Black Sea has become a German lake. The Caspian may be made to subserve German purposes hardly less effectively.

These are broad generalities. The situation deserves to be examined in something more of detail. There can no longer be any obscurity as to the governing motive by which the action of Germany in 1914 was inspired. The chastisement, indeed the annihilation, of Serbia was not merely the occasion but the fundamental cause of the war. An independent Serbia, still more a Serbia fortified by the adhesion of its

[1] Herr Jäckh (*Deutsche Politik*, quoted in *The Times*, April 27, 1918).

co-nationals and expanded into Jugo-Slavia, barred the path of Habsburg ambitions towards Salonika, and blocked Germany's access to Constantinople. Belgrade held the key to the position, and the key must be in German pockets. Only the Jugo-Slavs stood between the Central Empires and the realization of their dream of a *Mitteleuropa*, stretching from Hamburg to Constantinople, and opening to the Power which dominated Constantinople almost boundless potentialities of penetration and expansion in the Middle-East. But behind the Jugo-Slavs stood Russia; Russia therefore must, as a military power, be destroyed. That object has been, at least temporarily, achieved: Russia has ceased to count, and indeed, for the time being, to exist. Serbia had already been annihilated; Turkey and Bulgaria are the obsequious vassals of Germany. Two other Balkan Powers remained. On the two flanks of Germany advancing towards Constantinople lay Roumania and Greece. The dynastic leanings of King Constantine combined with the inept diplomacy of the Entente Powers to remove any danger to Germany from the side of Greece for nearly three years after the outbreak of the War. In 1914 Greece could boast a statesman who, in courage and clear-sightedness, was second to none in Europe, and whose loyalty to the Allies was equalled only by his devotion to the interests of his own country. The eminent qualities of M. Venizelos were rendered of no avail by the pro-German sympathies of his sovereign and by the irresolute and incomprehensible policy of the Allies. By their mishandling of the Greek question—such is the main contention of a recent French critic[1]—the Allies not only compromised gravely the interests of Greece itself, but they precipitated the destruction of Serbia; they paralysed the action, at a most critical moment, of Roumania; they did much to ensure the immediate hegemony of Bulgaria in the Balkans; and, above all, they contributed, through Bulgarian hegemony, to the success of German arms and German diplomacy in the Near East. It is a powerful indictment, nor can it be lightly brushed aside. Candour compels the admission that we know as yet

[1] Monsieur A. Gauvin, *L'Affaire grecque* (Paris, 1917).

only the case for the prosecution. Time must elapse before the archives of the Chancelleries can yield their secrets to the historical investigator. When all is known much may be forgiven to the diplomatists of the Entente. But the mere recital of the known events does, in the meantime, appear to substantiate a *prima facie* charge of weakness, vacillation, and ineptitude. As to the obstacles which impeded the diplomacy of the Allies at Athens, we may not even hazard a conjecture. The results, however, are disastrously clear. We put heart into our enemies and discouraged our friends. In the quarrel between King Constantine and Venizelos we had no right to interfere; but the king's violation of the Hellenic Constitution not only gave to the Protecting Powers, under the Treaty of 1863, a clear opportunity; it imposed upon them a definite duty. They missed the one and evaded the other. Messages from Berlin exhorted King Constantine to hold on until the German armies had driven the Allies into the sea. Consequently the king was always playing for time; the procrastinations of the Allies allowed him to gain it. Meanwhile, the attitude of his partisans in Athens towards the Allies grew daily more insolent until, at the beginning of December 1916, it culminated in the attack upon the small Franco-British force which Admiral de Fourmet, wisely or, as more think, unwisely, landed at the Piraeus.

After that humiliating episode there was, for a time, some improvement in the formal relations between Constantine and the Protecting Powers. An apology for the outrage of December 1–2 was tendered and accepted, and Constantine withdrew the Greek army from Thessaly, where it obviously threatened the security of the allied force in Salonika. Essentially, however, the situation was an impossible one. Greece was rent in twain. The authority of Venizelos was firmly established in Salonika; at Athens the king's position was apparently unassailable.

Then there occurred two events of profound and far-reaching significance. On March 13, 1917, the revolution broke out in Russia; on April 6 the United States of America entered the War on the side of the Allies. The repercussion of these

events was felt throughout the world and not least powerfully in South-Eastern Europe. On May 1 a Congress representative of the Hellenic colonies met in Paris, passed a resolution in favour of the establishment of a Republic in Greece, and called upon the Protecting Powers, Great Britain, France, and Russia, to facilitate the summoning of a Constituent Assembly in Athens, and to recognize the Republic which such an Assembly would assuredly proclaim. A few days later the 'National Government' at Salonika demanded the immediate deposition of King Constantine.

At last the Allies made up their minds to tardy but energetic action. On June 11 King Constantine was required to abdicate in favour of his second son Alexander, and on the following day he was deported with the queen and crown prince to Switzerland. The young King Alexander, after a futile manifestation of independence, was taught his constitutional position; he was required to dismiss M. Zaimis and to recall M. Venizelos, under whose strong, sagacious, and statesmanlike guidance Greece has once again regained her unity. A few days after the return of Venizelos to Athens the Hellenic Kingdom broke off relations with the Central Empires (June 27, 1917), and definitely took its place in the Grand Alliance.

Whether, and if so how far, the stiffening attitude of the Western Powers towards Constantine was attributable to the overthrow of the Tsardom; how far, to a fresh infusion of democratic fervour supplied by the adhesion of the United States, are questions which it is natural to ask, but impossible, as yet, to answer. This much, however, is certain. These events, so momentous and so nearly simultaneous, could not fail to have affected profoundly both the diplomatic and the military situation.

With the terms of the peace imposed by Germany upon the Russian Bolsheviks this chapter is not concerned: nor with the 'independence' of Finland; the annexation of the Baltic provinces; and the restoration of a mutilated Poland. The Treaty dictated to the Ukraine on February 9, 1918, touches very closely the problem of the Near East; the Treaty of

Bucharest which Roumania was compelled to sign on May 7 is, in the same connexion, even more significant.

The Treaty with the Ukraine possesses a fivefold significance: it detaches from Russia one of the richest provinces of the Empire; it establishes over the Ukraine what is in effect a German protectorate; it so defines the boundaries of the Protectorate as to defeat the Nationalist aspirations of the Poles; it gives Germany a commanding position on the Black Sea, and it places the vast industrial and agricultural resources of a country rich in both at the disposal of the Central Allies and in particular of Germany. That the peasants of the Ukraine, warlike and independent, will allow themselves to be exploited in perpetuity either in a political or in an economic sense by their German task-masters is, in the highest degree, improbable. German methods of administration are not likely in the long run to prove more popular in the Ukraine than in German South-West or East Africa; but if there were the least chance that the terms accepted in the recent Treaty would be adhered to, they would secure to Germany compensations for many disappointments incurred elsewhere.

From the Ukraine we may pass to Roumania. The lot of Roumania is indeed a pitiable one. In Roumania public opinion was, on the first outbreak of the War, sharply divided. The sympathies of King Carol drew him, not unnaturally, towards his Hohenzollern kinsmen; his old friend and confidant, Demetrius Sturdza, was inclined strongly in the same direction. The monarchy of Roumania is, however, 'limited' to a degree not realized elsewhere in the Balkans. Had it not been genuinely 'constitutional', Roumania would, in 1914, have been committed to co-operation with the Central Empires. Nor was her choice between the alternatives open to her quite obviously dictated by her interests. The Habsburgs, it is true, kept a tight grip upon the Roumanians of Transylvania and the Bukovina; but, on the other hand, Russia showed no disposition to surrender Bessarabia. Roumania might well hesitate as to her true policy. But in October 1914 death removed the two strongest German partisans in Roumania: Demetrius Sturdza and King Carol himself. Nevertheless, for nearly two years the

neutrality formally declared by Roumania at the beginning of the War was scrupulously maintained. It was confidently hoped by the Entente Powers that it would end in the spring of 1915. Between Roumania and Italy there have long been intimate relations, founded perhaps upon racial, certainly upon cultural and political affinities. It was expected, therefore, that Italy's entrance into the War would be quickly followed by that of Roumania. But not until August 1916 was the expectation fulfilled. In this hesitation on the part of Roumania Monsieur Gauvin finds, *more suo*, yet another confirmation of the ineptitude of allied diplomacy. It may be so. But the sequel proved that Roumania was not without good reasons for hesitation. A transient success in Transylvania was all that she achieved by intervention. Mackensen invaded the Dobrudja from the south in September, and before the end of October captured the rising sea-port of Constanza. Falkenhayn advancing from the west joined hands with Mackensen at the end of November, and on December 6 the German armies entered Bucharest. They remained in occupation of Roumanian territory up to the line of the Sereth throughout the year 1917, and gathered from the conquered land a rich harvest of grain. Into Moldavia, whither the Roumanian Government had retired, the Central Empires made no attempt to penetrate, being content to await events. Nor was it long before their patience was rewarded.

The military collapse of Russia sealed the fate of Roumania. King Ferdinand's Government had, it is true, attributed their military disasters in the autumn of 1916 to the supineness, or something worse, of their Russian ally. Be that as it may, Russia's withdrawal from the War put Roumania at the mercy of the Central Empires. With Serbia annihilated, Bulgaria triumphant, and the narrow straits still in the custody of the Ottoman Turks, no succour could reach her from any of the Entente Powers save Russia. Perforce, therefore, Roumania was compelled to concur in the suspension of hostilities to which the Russian Bolsheviks and the Central Empires agreed, in December 1917. Nevertheless, she announced that though she agreed to suspend hostilities she would not enter into

peace negotiations. But the logic of events proved irresistible. On February 9 the Central Empires concluded peace with the Central Rada of the Ukraine, one of that 'series of entities which', in Herr von Kühlmann's words, 'have partly attained full national status and are partly developing towards that end'.[1] That peace has not been recognized by the Western Powers. To recognize it would mean the repudiation and amputation of another 'entity', now in the grip of the Central Empires, Poland. But the lack of such recognition does not disconcert Germany. The occupation of Odessa and Sebastopol is a substantial set-off against the sentimental claims of incipient nationalities.

More significant is the protest issued from Paris by the Roumanians in exile against the Treaty of Bucharest (May 23). That the terms of the Treaty, definitively concluded at Bucharest on May 7, should be humiliating to the pride and deeply prejudicial to the material interests of Roumania was under the circumstances inevitable. A large proportion of her territory was in the actual occupation of the enemy; on one flank was Germany's new vassal State, the Ukraine; on the other Germany's devoted but dependent ally, King Ferdinand of Bulgaria. Consequently Roumania, deserted and indeed actually attacked by Russia, cut off from all possible means of succour from her Western Allies, had no alternative but to accept the terms imposed upon her by the Central Empires. Those terms are the terms of a conqueror *sans phrase*; they embody in its extremest form the principle of *vae victis*. Bulgaria has already regained all that she lost of the Dobrudja in 1913, with a considerable additional slice—in fact up to Trajan's wall; the rest of that province is to be held for the present by the Central Allies in *condominium*. If Bulgaria behaves well; if she pays her debts to Germany and makes the required territorial concessions to Germany's ally the Ottoman Sultan, she is eventually to acquire the remainder of the Dobrudja, with the exception of a corner of the Danube delta. This is left to Roumania, who is to retain also commercial access to the Black Sea via Constanza. Bulgaria,

[1] Speech in the Reichstag, June 25, 1918.

meanwhile, must stand on her hind legs until her German master throws the rest of the biscuits to her. Austria-Hungary, disdaining 'territorial annexations', obtains, nevertheless, a substantial 'frontier rectification' demanded by strategical considerations, a rectification which will bring her to the foothills on the eastern and southern slopes of the Carpathians, whence she will have Roumania completely at her mercy. The economic resources of Roumania, and in particular her surplus supplies of grain and oil, are to be at the disposal of her conquerors, who are further to enjoy rights of military transport through Moldavia and Bessarabia to Odessa. By thus providing a corridor to Odessa and Constanza respectively Germany will command two of the most important ports on the Black Sea and will secure alternative routes to the Middle East. 'Roumania', as Herr von Kühlmann lately pointed out, 'is of great importance for us [Germans] as a thoroughfare to the Black Sea and the East in general.' Consequently the interests of Danube shippings 'have been very much considered in the Treaty'. Moreover, the railway questions have been 'adjusted in the most comprehensive way', notably by the leasing of the Czernavoda-Constanza railway to a German industrial company for a long term, and in addition 'an exclusive right of laying cables on the Roumanian coast has been acquired until 1950'. Thus, as von Kühlmann complacently remarks, Germany has 'secured the possibilities of increased use of the Danube route, unrestricted traffic on the railways, and assured through cable and telegraphic communication', not to mention 'the necessary guarantees both for securing the fundamental conditions of our commercial intercourse for long years to come, and for making sure that the country (Roumania) shall deliver such cereals and other natural products and oil production as it is in a position to give'. Other provisions of the Treaty of Bucharest secure to the Central Empires pretexts for perpetual interference in the internal concerns of what remains of the independent Kingdom of Roumania and the means of playing off race against race and creed against creed.

In view of the cruel terms imposed by this Treaty upon

Roumania it is pathetic to recall the high hopes with which she entered the War two years ago. The hour of her destiny, as she believed, had struck. At last she was about to achieve the ethnographical unity of the Rouman race. 'To-day it is given us to assure unshakably that in its fullness the work momentarily realized by Michael the Brave—the union of the Roumanians on both sides the Carpathians.' Such was King Ferdinand's call to his people on August 27, 1916. To-day Roumania, like Serbia, and with less hope than Serbia of succour from the Western Powers, lies crushed beneath the heel of a pitiless conqueror.

Disastrous to Roumania, destructive of her economic and political independence, deeply humiliating to her pride, the Treaty of Bucharest possesses an even deeper and wider significance. It is proclaimed and accepted in Germany as 'a model of the peace to be imposed upon all our enemies'. Those enemies will neglect that warning only at their peril. Almost incredible in its insolence, it is, nevertheless, seriously meant. In such measure as Germany has meted out to Roumania will she mete out to all who similarly fall into her power. In August 1916 Roumania, taking her courage in both hands, reached a momentous decision. Like her Italian kinsmen in 1855 she put her fate to the touch; and the words of Mr. Bratianu uttered in December 1917 recall the famous speech delivered by Cavour under widely different circumstances in 1856: 'Whatever our sufferings are to-day . . . we have introduced Roumania's just cause to the conscience of Europe.' The Western Allies will not be so base as to ignore the introduction.

Meanwhile, Germany and her allies remain, on paper at least, dominant in South-Eastern Europe. But there are certain features in the situation which deserve notice and which, if closely examined, may serve to correct a first impression. The first is that the interests of Germany may not impossibly be found to clash with those of her subordinate allies. A clear hint of such a conflict was conveyed in von Kühlmann's recent speech in the Reichstag (June 24). The disappearance of the Tsar's Government gave rise, as he justly remarked, 'to a whole

series of questions in the Caucasus'. One of these was the sphere of influence to be assigned respectively to the Germans and the Turks. The Porte obtained a promise in the Brest-Litovsk Treaty that it should recover the districts which it had lost in 1877–8 to the Russians. But the Porte, having got much, resolved to get more. The Turkish army, 'for reasons of safety, pushed the left wing of its advancing army fairly wide into regions which indubitably, according to the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, could not come into question for permanent occupation by Turkey'. The language is restrained, but not on that account the less significant. Meanwhile, the Turkish advance in the Caucasus has, we are informed, 'been stopped', while General von Kriess has been dispatched on a diplomatic mission to Tiflis, in order to obtain a satisfactory insight into the situation in Georgia itself and the 'very confused situation in the Caucasus'. We can conjecture how the confusion, now that the Turkish advance in the Caucasus has been arrested, will be exploited in the interests of Germany.

The relations of Germany and the Porte are, then, somewhat uneasy in the Caucasus. Much more difficult are the relations between Turkey and Bulgaria in the Balkans. The Tsar Ferdinand is by no means content with that portion of the Dobrudja which, as we have seen, has been already assigned to him under the last Treaty of Bucharest. He wants the whole of that much-disputed province. But he is not to get it until he has satisfied the Porte in Thrace. This, it would seem, he is not disposed to do. He wants, in fact, both to eat his cake and have it: to get the whole of the Dobrudja as well as Greek Macedonia without making any concessions to the Porte in regard to the Adrianople district. While the Russian army was in the field, still more when Roumania joined the Entente, Germany had little difficulty in dealing with her vassals in the Balkans. With Russia and Roumania both *hors de combat*, the respective claims of Bulgaria and Turkey begin to wear a less reconcilable aspect.

At the same time, Constantinople itself has, owing to the course of events, become less indispensable to the satisfaction of German ambitions. In the original scheme for the conduct

of the War the alliance with the Turks was pivotal. By means of his alliance with the Khalif and Sultan, the Kaiser hoped to cut the line of communications between Great Britain and her Eastern Empire. From the Bosphorus he could threaten Egypt and the Canal. Constantinople was all-important as a station on the trunk-line between Bremen and Basra. Just as in the fifteenth century the Sea-Powers of Western Europe turned the flank of the Ottoman Turks by the discovery of the Cape Route to India, so in the twentieth should Germany turn the flank of the Mistress of the Seas by the construction and development of the Bagdad railway.

The scheme has miscarried at both points. The steady advance from the shores of the Canal into Palestine has, it may be hoped, dissipated all immediate danger on the side of Egypt; Sir Stanley Maude's brilliant campaign in Mesopotamia, culminating in the retaking of Kut and the capture of Bagdad, has shattered the dream—a dream which had already to a large extent materialized—of an all-German route from Hamburg, via Bagdad, to the Persian Gulf. If, despite the defection of Russia, the British position in Mesopotamia be strengthened or even maintained, one of the objects, perhaps the leading object, which induced Germany to plunge the world into war, will have been decisively defeated. No words can indeed adequately measure the debt which the British Empire owes to the labours of General Allenby and General Maude and the gallant troops they have been privileged to command.

Yet the admission must be made that the menace to the world-power of Britain has been not so much frustrated as diverted. The terms of the treaties imposed by the Central Powers upon Russia, the Ukraine, and Roumania, open out to German ambition fresh and unexpected possibilities. No student of Near-Eastern politics could have been blind to the schemes skilfully and persistently pursued by Germany in Asia Minor and Mesopotamia during the last twenty years. But who could have foreseen that, at the very moment when the German advance in this direction had been blocked by the success of British arms, the folly and pusillanimity of an

ally would offer to Germany alternative routes to the Far East? It cannot be pretended that Berlin to Bokhara is quite so attractive a project as Berlin to Basra. The Trans-Caspian line is neither so direct nor so convenient as the *Bagdadbahn*; but it must be confessed that it is in the last degree exasperating to the opponents of Germany that as soon as the earlier and superior project had been defeated a very tolerable second string should have been provided. Nor must it be forgotten that the route, via Kieff and Baku, runs through a country which is exceptionally rich in grain, oil, and minerals. Important commercially, the route is not less important strategically. One of the stations on the trunk road to Bokhara is Merv, whence a branch line runs to the frontier of Afghanistan. The menace implied in the mention of these names cannot prudently be ignored; though it may be admitted that a line of communication depending for its continuity upon the goodwill of Poles, Cossacks, and Armenians, to say nothing of the trans-Caspian provinces, can hardly be described as comfortably secure.

A second alternative route to the East captured the imagination of certain German Chauvinists in the early part of the present year (1918). The catch-word 'Berlin-Tokyo' temporarily superseded the older 'Bremen-Basra'. But a discussion of the ideas involved in the phrase need not detain us. The remarkable development of the Czecho-Slovak movement in Siberia; the readiness of Japan to intervene with an effective force, and the landing of British troops at Vladivostock, all give reason to hope that the Berlin-Tokyo alternative will not long remain open to German ambitions. We must, however, expect that the denial of alternatives will impel Germany to concentrate all her efforts upon the realization of the dream which lured her into the present War. Until that dream has been finally dissipated there can be no real peace. M. André Chéradame was not mistaken when he said: 'Le plan pangermaniste constitue la raison unique de la guerre. Il est, en effet, la cause à la fois de sa naissance et de sa prolongation jusqu'à la victoire des Alliés indispensable à la liberté du monde.' The collapse of Russia, the treachery

or simplicity which induced the Bolshevik leaders to enter upon the negotiations which issued in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the disintegration of the Empire of the Romanoffs, may tempt Germany to seize a less intrinsically attractive but more immediately practicable alternative to the scheme as originally planned; but, whatever the means adopted, Germany will not forgo the supreme end for which she drew the sword —domination in the Near and Middle East.

Dr. Naumann has recently defined, with some precision, the lines upon which, if the issue rests with her, Germany will proceed in the settlement of the Balkan problem: the Ottoman Turk is to be secured by Germany in possession of Constantinople and his former dominions in Asia, and Germany is 'to remain the friend of our friends both in Syria and Mesopotamia'; Roumania is to surrender all hope of recovering any part of the Dobrudja, and to find compensation—of course at the expense of Russia—in Bessarabia; Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria are to come to an agreement in regard to Serbia; the whole eastern coast of the Adriatic is to remain within the sphere of Austria-Hungary, which is further to control the future Trieste-Serajevo-Scutari-Valona-Ochrida-Athens railway, while Salonika and Monastir would fall within the Bulgarian sphere; Greece, 'in view of her unsatisfactory attitude' in this War, is to be compelled to renounce Macedonia and Salonika, but is to be permitted to extend her Adriatic coast-line; finally, the hegemony of the Balkans is to be vested in Bulgaria, and 'Germany will rejoice in the strength of her ally'.[1]

The scheme for the reconstruction of the Balkans drafted by Dr. Naumann is eminently characteristic of German methods and principles. Of only one consideration is account taken: the convenience of Germany and her allies. Principles of nationality; affinity of race; community of traditions—all these are ignored. *Vae victis.* The loser must pay. Many embarrassing complications are thereby avoided; but the acceptance of the principle involves a corollary. The fight must be fought to a finish; no one can afford to be the loser.

[1] *Die Hilfe*, quoted in *New Europe*, August 8, 1918, p. 96.

If might is right, only the sword can decide the issue. For peace by negotiation there is no room. Gratitude is due, therefore, to Dr. Naumann for the explicitness with which he has defined the solution which Germany may be expected to offer for the immemorial, yet ever-changing, problem of the Near East.

Not upon these lines will a permanent solution be reached. If the principles solemnly proclaimed by the Allies are to prevail; if the new map of Europe is so drawn as to respect them, the Balkan lands will be divided among the Balkan peoples. But the geographical distribution of those peoples is so complex, the ethnographical demarcation is so disputable, that the mere enunciation of the nationality principle will not suffice for a satisfactory settlement. Greeks, Bulgars, Albanians, Roumanians, and Southern Slavs will have to learn to live side by side in the Balkan Peninsula on terms if not of precise mathematical equality, at least of mutual forbearance and goodwill.

Not otherwise can there be peace for them or for Europe at large. Ever since the advent of the Turk the Balkans have been one of the main battle-grounds of Europe. For at least a century the Balkans have been the storm-centre of European politics. The struggle for Hellenic independence; the ambition of Mehemet Ali; the rivalry of Russia and Great Britain at Constantinople; the jealousies of Great Britain and France in Egypt; the inclusion of the Jugo-Slavs in the heterogeneous Empire of the Habsburgs; the determination of the Hohenzollern to extend Pan-German domination from Berlin to Basra—these have been among the chief causes of unrest in Europe from the overthrow of Napoleon to the outbreak of the European War. In an unsolved Eastern Question the origin of that War is to be found. For that secular problem the Peace must propound a solution. Should it fail to do so, the Near East will in the future, as in the past, afford a nidus for international rivalries, furnish occasions for recurring strife, provide a rich soil for the propagation of international rivalries, and produce an abundant harvest of litigation and of war.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE PROBLEM OF THE ADRIATIC

Italy, Austria, and the Southern Slavs

'The question of the Adriatic is a universal question, and it is no exaggeration to say that the future of the world may, to a very large extent, depend upon its solution.'—E. Denis.

In Western ears, and particularly in those of Englishmen too little accustomed to the analysis of diplomatic problems, the claim put forward in the above sentence may appear to be extravagant and even fanciful. Yet it will not be denied that among the problems which the present War has forced prominently to the front there is none more perplexing and none more intrinsically interesting than that which concerns the future of the Adriatic and the cities and provinces which fringe its coasts. Nor is there any in regard to which, for reasons which will presently appear, the position of Great Britain is more delicate. That being so, it might seem that the best service which an Englishman can, in this case, render to his country and its allies is to hold his peace. If the self-denying ordinance were universally respected that might be so. As a fact it is far otherwise.

On behalf of one, if not both the parties who are more immediately interested in the solution of this question, an active propaganda has for some time past been carried on in this country. Expression is frequently given to extreme views on one side and the other. A passionate appeal is made, now to history, now to ethnography, now to geography, now to the imperious claims of economic interest, now to those of strategical security. The question is, however, one on which it is eminently desirable that the people of this country should have accurate and dispassionate information. It may not, therefore, be amiss that one who is not conscious

of bias in favour of either of the two chief claimants, should endeavour to set forth the facts of a complicated situation as simply and succinctly as the circumstances of the case permit. Such is the purpose of the pages that follow.

The difficulty of the task is accentuated by the fact that in order to arrive at a fair verdict it will be necessary to assign comparative values to elements which are not really comparable and to weigh considerations for which there is no common scale: considerations of race, of historical tradition, of numbers, of national security, of economic interest. Should the investigation lead to a somewhat halting conclusion, this initial fact should in fairness be borne in mind.

In the Adriatic problem there seem to be three primary elements:

(i) The position and claims of Italy, which less than half a century ago realized her national identity and attained the goal of national unity. That unity, it is contended, must be still incomplete so long as large Italian populations remain under an alien yoke, and so long as provinces and cities which are manifestly Italian in origin and culture remain unredeemed.

(ii) The position of the Southern Slavs who are inspired with a growing sense of national self-consciousness but are as yet very far from having attained to political unity. Their claim is that the time has come for the fulfilment of their aspirations, and they demand such access to the Adriatic littoral as will assure their national future in an economic, strategical, and geographical sense.

(iii) The position of the central empires of Germany and Austria-Hungary. With them it is not a question of satisfying sentiments of race or nationality. Their claims to a place on the Adriatic are frankly utilitarian: it is demanded in the interests of commerce and strategy, and they are in possession.

To these three primary elements we may add a fourth and secondary element. It has become fashionable to assume that the principle of a Balance of Power, the theory of a European equilibrium, belongs to a relatively remote and

entirely benighted period when diplomacy subserved dynastic interests, when the claims of democracy were ignored, and before there was any idea of remodelling the map of Europe in deference to the elusive principle of nationality. Nevertheless, it will not be denied that it is very obviously of the first importance to Europe at large, and in particular to those Western Powers which, like England, have vital interests in the Mediterranean, that there should be such an adjustment of these conflicting claims as may secure prolonged, if not permanent, repose in South-Eastern Europe.

Such being the parties to the suit, we must next attempt to ascertain where their claims do actually conflict, and where their interests appear to be intrinsically incompatible. The principal areas of conflict are: (i) The Trentino or Southern Tyrol[1]; (ii) the city and district of Trieste, with which we may conveniently group the district of Gorizia-Gradisca; (iii) Istria, with the important naval dockyard of Pola; (iv) Croatia-Slavonia, with the commercial port of Fiume; (v) Dalmatia, the mainland coast and the archipelago; (vi) Albania; and (vii) the Serbian hinterland, including the existing kingdom of Serbia and the States, such as Bosnia and the Herzegovina, and perhaps Montenegro, which it is hoped to include in the Greater Serbia of the future. At present this Serbian Group touches the Adriatic only through Montenegro, with its port of Antivari. Of the whole of these contested areas, except part of Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania, the Dual Monarchy is at present in possession.

Before proceeding to discuss the claims put forward by the several parties to all or any of these areas it may be convenient to interject a few words as to the origin of the Adriatic problem. In one sense the problem dates back to the dawn of authentic history, but in its modern shape it did not become acute until about half a century ago. Its genesis may be traced, on the one hand, to the unification of Italy under the House of Savoy, and in particular to the

[1] The Trentino is not *geographically* an Adriatic province, but politically it forms part, as will presently appear, of the Adriatic problem.

expulsion of the Habsburgs from Venetia, or rather from that part of Venetia which lies on the west of the Adriatic; and on the other to the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, and the re-emergence of the Balkan nationalities which for five hundred years had lain inert and dumb under the Turkish yoke. This re-emergence began with the Serbian insurrection of 1804, but it did not seriously affect the Adriatic problem until the Balkan War of 1912–13.

In 1866 there happened two events of supreme significance in the history of the Habsburgs, to be followed in 1867 by a third. Bismarck, who entered upon his political career, as he has himself told us, with 'feelings of admiration, nay almost of religious reverence, for the policy of Austria', had by 1862 come to the conclusion that Austria was devoting all her thought and energy to one end: to thwart the progress of Prussia, and to make the machinery of the *Bund* subserve that object. He decided, therefore, that at the first opportunity the *Bund* must be dissolved and that Austria must be expelled from the new Germany which was to come into existence under the hegemony of Prussia. The decisive struggle between Austria and Prussia came, as we have seen, in 1866, and culminated in the Prussian victory at Sadowa (Königgrätz). To make the assurance of victory doubly sure Bismarck had in April 1866 concluded a treaty with Victor Emmanuel of Italy. The latter had, with some magnanimity, given Austria the first chance, and had offered to assist Austria against Prussia, in return for the cession of Venetia. The Emperor Francis Joseph not unnaturally refused the proffered terms, but the refusal cost him dear. Bismarck's terms were accepted by Italy, and in the Seven Weeks' War Italy fought on the side of Prussia.

The sequel was characteristic. The new frontier of Italy was drawn with a most niggardly hand. The assistance rendered by the Italian forces on land and sea during the Seven Weeks' War was not indeed such as to entitle her to an ounce more than the promised pound of flesh. And Bismarck, though true to the letter of his bond, took good care that the weight was not exceeded. On the contrary,

'Venetia' was interpreted in the narrowest possible sense. The northern frontier of Italy was defined in such a way as to deprive Italy of a compact mass of 370,000 Italians, to exclude the industrial products of these Italian people from their natural market in north Italy, and to thrust into the heart of an Italian province the military outpost of an unfriendly neighbour. From the boundary definition of 1866 has arisen the Trentino problem of to-day.

But that was not the only, nor, from our present standpoint, the most important, feature of the readjustment of 1866.

Italian though the Trentini are in race, in language, and in sympathies, the Trentino had never formed part of the kingdom of Italy, except for five years (1809–14), when it was annexed to his Italian kingdom by Napoleon. Nor was it ever politically united to Venetia except during the periods 1797–1805 and 1815–66, when Venice itself was under Habsburg rule. The same is true of Trieste. But it was otherwise with the Venetian provinces to the east of the Adriatic, Istria and Dalmatia, which Austria also retained in 1866. For four centuries at least the Venetian Republic had been dominant on the eastern coast of the Adriatic, and ardent Italians to-day base their claims upon an even earlier title. But be that as it may, a great opportunity was lost by Italy in 1866. Had Venice been wrung from Austria by Italy's strong right arm, instead of being accepted from Bismarck as the price of a diplomatic bargain, and in spite of a dubious success on land and a disastrous defeat at sea, there might be no Adriatic problem to-day.

To the details of that problem we may now turn. Let it be borne in mind that the essence of the problem is in the first place a contest between Italy and Austria-Hungary for the recovery or acquisition by the former of 'unredeemed Italy', and, secondly, that it raises the question as to the equitable adjustment of the conflicting claims of 'Italia Irredenta' on the one hand and 'Serbia Irredenta' on the other.

The Trentino or Southern Tyrol presents a problem which is comparatively easy of solution. To no power in Europe—

great or small—is its possession vital except to Italy. For Austria-Hungary it signifies nothing save a strategic outpost, a strongly entrenched camp barring access to roads which Italy has no desire to tread except for the purpose of acquiring the camp itself. To Italy, therefore, it would afford a defensive frontier; to Austria it has no meaning except for purposes of offence. Military and political considerations would alike seem to point, therefore, to the transference of the Trentino from Austria to Italy. Economic considerations are at least equally insistent in a similar sense. The Trentino is geographically 'nothing but a prolongation of the valley of Venetia and Lombardy; all its gates are open towards Italy'.[1] In a geographical sense they are; but the gates which Nature left open man presumed to shut. Between the Trentino and Italy there is an almost impassable barrier of forts and custom-houses. Thus the Italians of the Southern Tyrol have, by most sinister fortune, been industrially ruined in consequence of the triumph of the national movement in Italy. The completion of Italian unity, involving, of course, the acquisition of Lombardy and Venetia from Austria, has brought commercial disaster upon the toiling peasants of the high valleys of the Trentino. The new customs-frontier, demarcated in a completely arbitrary and artificial fashion in 1866, has cut off the Italians to the north of it from their natural markets in the valley of the Po. The Trentino, writes Signor Gayda,

'had a most flourishing silk industry which in 1866 gave employment to ten thousand workers: the little white town of Rovereto alone consumed in its world-famous silk-mills not only the whole product of cocoons in the Trentino, but also a part of that of Venetia and Lombardy. The tiny town of Ala had eleven velvet factories. In the valleys of the Sarca and the Chiese there were many glassworks. A small and mountainous country, the Trentino, with these resources, exploited by the willing labour of its simple people, was well on the road to progress. In 1866, however,... it lost at once its

[1] Cf. Virginio Gayda, *Modern Austria*, pp. 15, 16. References to Signor Gayda's work will be to the English edition lately published by Mr. Fisher Unwin, price 10*s.* 6*d.* net. Prefixed to this edition is a newly written section on 'Italia Irredenta', which puts the Italian case temperately and strongly.

natural market and its centres of supply. A distant province on the periphery of the Empire, cut off from all the great internal centres of Austria, it could not make up for its sudden losses. It was a plant cut off from its roots. And it is dying. Its silk-mills can no longer import cocoons or export silken fabrics, and they are being closed. . . The paper-mills, the iron- and glass-works are disappearing. . . Isolated, forced back upon itself, the Trentino had to transform itself from an industrial country into an agricultural Alpine land. This meant the ruin of the whole population.'[1]

This would, indeed, seem to be the object of its present rulers; and it cannot be denied that the means they employ are nicely calculated to attain the desired end. Its superb water-power is allowed to run to waste; the construction of roads and railways, though urgently demanded by the people, is prohibited; the rich pastures are generally inadequately stocked, and are sometimes even derelict; in brief, the country is being subjected by its Austrian rulers to systematic economic strangulation.

Is this mere stupidity or deliberate policy? The persecution to which the Trentini have, in recent years, been exposed at every turn by the Austrian officials would seem to suggest the latter alternative. At the same time it explains the eagerness of the inhabitants to escape from a régime so entirely unsympathetic, and to be allowed politically to rejoin their brethren in the valley of the Po. A reunion would involve very little dislocation to Austrian administration, and still less to Austrian inhabitants in the district. Apart from the military and official class, the latter are quite negligible in numbers, amounting to less than 5,000 out of a population of 385,000. Ethnographically, therefore, Italy can advance a very strong claim to the Trentino. A distinguished American publicist has lately raised the question whether the union of the Trentini with Italy is really demanded in the interests either of Italy or of Europe at large any more 'than would be the union with Italy of the Italian Cantons of the Swiss Confederation'.[2] To this

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 20.
[2] H. A. Gibbons's *New Map of Europe*, p. 117.

question there are several answers, each tolerably conclusive. The Swiss Italians form a component part of a truly federal State; the Tyrolese Italians do not. The former are at no economic disadvantage as compared with their Swiss fellow subjects; the latter suffer from grievous disabilities. The former desire no change; the latter will never be satisfied with things as they are.

It may be admitted that on historical grounds the Italian claim is not particularly strong. Under the Carolingian Empire Trent was included in the Venetian March or Duchy of Friuli, but for the greater part of the Middle Ages the Bishopric of Trent formed an independent ecclesiastical principality under the Holy Roman Emperor, and maintained that status until the great secularization of 1803, when it was definitely annexed to Austria. After Napoleon's victory over Austria at Austerlitz the new Charlemagne tossed the Tyrol, and with it the Trentino, to his client King of Bavaria, but five years later, as we have seen, he detached it from Bavaria and annexed it to his own kingdom of Italy. The latter broke up after Napoleon's abdication, and the Trentino went back, along with Lombardy and Venetia, to Austria. Still, even though the modern Kingdom of Italy can make a somewhat slender case on historical grounds, the ethnographic and economic reasons in favour of the reunion of the Trentino with Venetia are overwhelming. Nor, so far as I am aware, is there in any quarter, except at Vienna, any disposition to impede an arrangement so ardently desired by both the parties immediately concerned, and offering indisputable economic advantages. Even Germany professed her willingness to satisfy the wishes of Italy in this matter. 'Without a drop of blood flowing, and without the life of a single Italian being endangered, Italy could have secured the . . . territory in the Tyrol and on the Isonzo as far as the Italian speech is heard.' So said Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg in a recent speech in the Reichstag. Nor is there any reason to suppose that in this respect the German ex-Chancellor overstated the price which Germany was prepared to make Austria pay in order to avert the threatened rupture of the Triple Alliance.

Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg further asserted that in the same easy fashion Italy could have obtained 'satisfaction of the national aspirations in Trieste'. The expression used by the German ex-Chancellor is not free from ambiguity; but there is no ambiguity as to Italian ambitions in regard to Trieste. The city and district are claimed as Italian by right of culture, of historical tradition, and of population. As to the validity of the last claim there can be no question; in the city itself the Italians contribute 200,000 out of the total population of 250,000. That Trieste is culturally Latin and not either Teutonic or Slavonic will be disputed by no one. The historical claim is not quite so indisputable. Signor Gayda does not indeed hesitate to make it. Trieste, he affirms, 'has a proud Italian past: it goes back to Roman times when it formed, with all Istria, a single province together with Venetia. When Rome fell . . . its history as a free municipality . . . remained brilliantly Latin.'

But, historically, the Austrian claims cannot be disregarded. Trieste commended itself to the Duke of Austria in the fourteenth century, and, except during the Napoleonic régime, the Dukes of Austria have been suzerains, if not sovereigns, over Trieste from that day to this. Curiously enough, it was never absorbed into the Venetian Republic, by whose territory it was encompassed.

The Austrian claim does not, however, rest upon history alone. The commercial importance of this great Adriatic port, not to Austria only, but to all Southern Germany, is manifest. The head-quarters of the Austrian Lloyd and other important companies, it has a shipping trade amounting to nearly 5,000,000 tons per annum, and among the commercial ports of the Mediterranean it holds the fifth place. But if Trieste is important to Austria and the German States, so, as Dr. Seton Watson has pertinently observed, is the Germanic hinterland to Trieste. To incorporate Trieste for tariff purposes into the Kingdom of Italy would, he contends, 'mean the speedy economic ruin of a great and flourishing commercial centre'.[1]

Dr. Seton Watson is well known as an ardent champion of

[1] *The Balkans, Italy, and the Adriatic*, p. 58.

the Southern Slavs, and he may therefore be suspected of something more than indifference towards the aspirations of Italian irredentism. But to Trieste the Jugoslavs advance no claims, and Dr. Watson's argument, proceeding from a keen critic of Habsburg rule, is all the more entitled to respect. If we may assume the overthrow of Habsburg power in the Adriatic, it is unthinkable that Trieste should be permitted to break the continuity of Italian territory round the northern and north-eastern shores of the Adriatic. But if Trieste should incur the economic fate predicted by Dr. Seton Watson it would be good neither for Italy nor for the people of Trieste. Under the Emperor Charles VI Trieste was in 1719 constituted an open port, and so continued until the outbreak of the French Revolution. Is there any reason why, under Italian suzerainty, it should not revert to that condition?

A similar solution might perhaps be adopted in the case of the port of Fiume. The latter stands to the Hungarian kingdom in precisely the same relation as that subsisting between Trieste and the Austrian Duchy. The Magyars possessed themselves of Croatia-Slavonia in the eleventh century, and except for very brief interludes have never relaxed their hold. Fiume depends commercially upon the hinterland of Croatia-Slavonia and Hungary as Trieste does upon Austria and South Germany. But in population Fiume, like most of the coast towns, is predominantly Italian, though the Latins do not greatly outnumber the Slavs.[1] Croatia-Slavonia as a whole is insistently demanded for the Greater Serbia which is to be, but Dr. Seton Watson gives proof of a judicial mind in proposing that Fiume should become a free port under Serbian as Trieste under Italian suzerainty. Whether this solution will be acceptable to or accepted by the Italian irredentists is more than doubtful.

The negotiations which took place between Russia and Italy in the spring of 1915 throw some light upon the controversy and emphasize the doubt I have ventured to express. In April Russia proposed to Italy the formation

[1] 23,000 Italians as against 19,000 Slavs. Dr. Watson gives the Italians 25,000 in Fiume.

of two Slav States upon the Adriatic. Serbia was to be united with Bosnia and the Herzegovina, and to have the Dalmatian coast from the Narenta to Montenegro. To the north of this Greater Serbia there was to be an independent Croatia-Slavonia, enlarged by the acquisition of the Slavonic portions of Carniola and the greater part of Dalmatia, with Agram for a capital, and Fiume, Zara, and Sebenico as its chief ports on the Adriatic. Italy was to get Trieste with Venetia, Giulia or Western Istria, including the port of Pola. To these terms Italy emphatically objected. That the Greater Serbia should have ample commercial access to the Adriatic coast was frankly conceded by Italy, but strategically the Adriatic was to become once again what in the days of Venetian greatness it had virtually been, an Italian lake. Thus, in its issue of April 19, 1915, the *Giornale d'Italia* wrote:

'Neither a fort, nor a gun, nor a submarine that is not Italian ought to be in the Adriatic. Otherwise the present most difficult military situation in the Adriatic will be perpetuated, and will inevitably grow worse with time.'

Fiume then may possibly be a bone of contention between two races who are now happily allied not only with each other but with ourselves. Our own part in the matter will demand consideration later on.

The question of Istria should not prove difficult of adjustment, assuming, of course, the decisive defeat of the Austro-German allies. To the latter Istria is of immense strategical importance by reason of the port of Pola, the Portsmouth of the Adriatic, and the only great naval base which the Austrian Empire commands. Austria, however, will command it no longer if Italy emerges victorious from the present War. Nor, indeed, is Austria's title to it strong either on historical or ethnographic grounds. The western coast of Istria was in the possession of Venice for centuries prior to the Treaty of Campo-Formio (1797), when with Venice itself it passed, by arrangement with General Bonaparte, to Austria. From Venice it was never divorced until 1866. Along the western coast Italians still form the overwhelming majority of the population,[1] and Pola is unmistakably Italian.

[1] Some authorities put the Italian population as high as 80 per cent.

To this coast, therefore, Italy has an indisputable claim if nationality is to be the dominating principle of the great settlement. But the same principle which assigns Pola and the west coast of Istria to Italy will decree that the interior and the eastern part of the peninsula shall be united to the enlarged Croatia. Nor will geography forbid the banns.

The real crux of the Adriatic problem is reached when we pass from the Istrian peninsula to the Dalmatian coast and the Dalmatian archipelago. Here it is necessary to tread warily, if one would avoid pitfalls, historical, ethnographical, and political. Into the remoter history of these lands it is unnecessary to pry. It may, however, be said in passing that the modern Italian kingdom claims to be the successor in title not merely to the Venetian Republic but to the Roman Empire. But this claim is not likely to affect the ultimate verdict. It is common ground that for many centuries the sea power of the Venetian commonwealth dominated the Adriatic, and that despite many fluctuations of fortune Venice has left an ineffaceable mark upon the maritime cities of the Dalmatian coast and upon the islands with which it is fringed. Nor should it be forgotten that owing to the curiously contrasted configuration of the two coasts it was and is the possession of the eastern shore which gives the command of the sea. On the western shore there is no first-rate harbour between Brindisi and Venice, and except perhaps at Bari and Ancona no possibility of making one. The opposite coast from Trieste to Valona is one long succession of natural harbours: at Pola, Sebenico, and Cattaro the Austrians have already got important naval works, and potential bases exist at half a dozen more points. This fact would be in itself sufficient to explain the anxiety of modern Italy to redeem its Venetian inheritance. Sentiment, however, reinforces the dictates of expediency. One needs perhaps to have Italian blood in one's veins to realize the intensity of the feelings which animate the Italians of the kingdom towards the Italian colonies on the opposite coast. It is true that the Italians form to-day a relatively insignificant minority in most of the Dalmatian towns except

Zara, but this does not affect Italian sentiments. No one can set foot in any of these cities—Pola, Fiume, Zara, Spalatro, Ragusa, Cattaro—without becoming conscious of the pervasiveness of the Italian tradition.

The Italian claims on this part of the Adriatic have been semi-officially formulated as follows: (i) The Dalmatian mainland from Zara to the Montenegrin frontier with the naval bases of Sebenico and Cattaro, and (ii) the whole of the Dalmatian archipelago, including, of course, the important island of Lissa. Professor Cippico, himself a native of Zara, has recently advanced a similar claim with passionate earnestness.

'Men of every party in Italy are resolved', he writes, 'to-day that Italy's national geographical and strategical unity should finally be accomplished. Without restoring her position in Dalmatia and Istria it is universally felt Italy would perpetuate her present conditions of unrest and insecurity in the Adriatic, when her actual frontiers from Venice down to Brindisi and Santa Maria di Leuca, are indefensible and purely artificial, when every town and village on the opposite shore is a harmonic imitation and continuation in the architecture, as well as in the language and costumes, of Venice. Dalmatia and Istria have never, neither in geography nor in history, belonged to the Balkans.'[1]

The claim, it will be perceived, is based upon the plea of strategical necessity, but not less upon those of geography and historical and cultural tradition. What do the Southern Slavs and their friends and apologists in this country say to the Italian claim?

They begin by denying its historical validity. 'Dalmatia', says Dr. Seton Watson, roundly and bluntly, 'is Slav and has been so for over a thousand years.... Dalmatia has always led the van of the Jugoslav movement.... Italy has no ethnographic claim whatever to Dalmatia.' He is fain to admit that the Venetian Republic established its way along the coast as far back as the fifteenth century; but he contends that 'its influence was in the main confined to establishing *points d'appui* or strategic outposts for the fleet

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1915, p. 300.

and or the safety of its trade, now against the Turks, now against the notorious pirates who infested the innumerable islets and creeks of that intricate coast.' In support of his contention he appeals to Italian patriots like Mazzini and Niccolò Tommaseo. 'I do not believe', wrote the latter, himself a native of Sebenico, 'that Dalmatia could ever form an appendage to Italy.... Future destiny intends her to be the friend of Italy, but not her subject.'[1] It should be noted that these words, like those of Cavour, quoted below, were written before Austria had been driven out of Venice, before Italy had attained the goal of national unity, and before, therefore, she had developed to the full that sense of national self-consciousness by which her people are dominated to-day. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the Jugoslavs have a strong case, least of all by Englishmen, who are supremely anxious that the Adriatic problem should be solved in such a way as at once to satisfy the claims of historical justice and political expediency, and at the same time to provide the basis for a cordial and, if it may be, a permanent friendship between two peoples whom she desires to retain as friends and as allies. In Dalmatia the Slavs contribute ninety-six per cent. of the population. That they should possess the whole of the hinterland, to the west of the mountain barrier formed by the Carso, the Velebit, and the Dinaric Alps, is freely acknowledged even by the most extreme champions of the Italian cause. But if the Jugoslavia of the future is to be anything more than a third-rate power that concession is obviously insufficient. The Greater Serbia must have ample and assured access to the Adriatic coast. Had it not been for Austrian intervention Serbia would have secured that access after the first Balkan war, and in that event the second Balkan war might never have been fought, and Bulgaria might not be at the throats of Serbia and Greece to-day. With consummate adroitness did

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 61 *seq.* Dr. Watson might also have invoked the still higher authority of Cavour. 'I am not unaware', wrote Cavour in 1860, 'that in the towns along the [Dalmatian] coast there are centres of population which are Italian by race and aspirations. But in the country the inhabitants are all of the Slav race.'

Austro-German diplomacy attain the twofold object of heading Serbia off from the Adriatic, and thus thrusting her into sharp conflict with Bulgaria on her eastern frontier. It will be the special and urgent task of English diplomacy to frustrate any similar attempt to sow discord between Italy and Serbia.

One danger Italy has herself anticipated and averted. There can be no doubt that before the outbreak of the present War Germany was turning her thoughts towards the requisition of Valona as a naval base in the Adriatic, or that her insistence upon the creation of an autonomous Albania, under a German Prince, was a step towards the realization of her hopes. The timely seizure of Valona, so soon after the outbreak of hostilities, was not the least significant sign of Italy's approaching withdrawal from the Triple Alliance and not the least definite announcement of her resolve to keep in her own pocket the keys of the Adriatic. But Italy has not confined her activities in Albania to the naval occupation of Valona. For some years past her economic and cultural penetration of Albania has been proceeding apace. In Valona itself, in Scutari and Durazzo, Italian schools, Italian banks and Italian newspapers, afford some among many indications of the interest which Albania possesses alike for the Italian Government and for the Italian people.[1]

No activity on the part of Italy can, however, dispose of the equally insistent and the equally intelligible claims of the Southern Slavs. In 1912 Serbia would have been satisfied with a commercial outlet to the Adriatic. Her claim to such an outlet neither has been nor is denied by Italy. But in 1912 it was only a question of dividing the spoils of the Ottoman Empire. It is the hope and expectation of the Jugoslavs that at the next great settlement Austro-Hungary will be in the melting-pot. Should that hope be realized, it is obvious that an Albanian port would no longer satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Greater Serbia. Such a concession would be ridiculously inadequate as a recompense for all the sacrifices she has made and the sufferings she has under-

[1] Cf. M. Charles Vellay, *La Question de l'Adriatique*, pp. 14 *seq.*

gone. What is the extent of the claims now made on its behalf?

'Southern Slav unity', writes Dr. Wilson, 'means the union of the triune kingdom of Croatia–Slavonia–Dalmatia, of the Eastern or Slav portion of Istria, of the Slovene territory of Southern Austria (in Carniola, Carinthia, and Styria), and of Western or Serb section of the Banat, with the existing kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro, in a single Southern Slav state—the new Jugoslavia. Geographically it involves the acquisition of the river frontier of the Drave and the Mur on the north; the protection of Belgrade by a fair partition of the Banat between Serbia and Roumania; the discovery of a reasonable line separating Italian and Southern Slav territory on the west . . . and on the south the union of Montenegro and Serbia.'[1]

Such is the fundamental claim. It is beyond the scope of the present chapter to inquire how the aspirations of the Jugoslavs are to be translated into fact: whether the satisfaction of the nationality principle will make a unitarian state, or whether (as is more probable) the Southern Slavs will be content with some form of federalism. It may be assumed that there is an understanding between Serbia on the one hand, and Montenegro and Croatia-Slavonia upon the other. For the moment we are concerned only with the point at which the claims of Serbia Irredenta appear to conflict with those of Italia Irredenta, in Dalmatia.

If the extremists on either side are allowed to have their heads, it would seem to be inevitable that the assumed expulsion of Austro-Hungary from the Adriatic should be followed by an internecine struggle between Italy and Serbia. To those in England and elsewhere who are in cordial sympathy alike with the Italians and the Southern Slavs such a sequel to the present struggle is unthinkable.

To the Italians we Englishmen are bound in ties of traditional friendship. As long ago as 1848 Lord Palmerston favoured the withdrawal of Austria from north Italy, and the union of Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic under the House of Savoy. In the intensely critical period between the armistice of Villafranca (July 8, 1859) and the annexation

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 40, 41.

of the two Sicilies to the north Italian kingdom (November 1860) the cause of Italian unity had no more cordial advocate than Great Britain. It is indeed questionable whether Italy had any other friend among the Powers. Napoleon III would certainly have prevented Garibaldi crossing from Sicily to the mainland in 1860, if England would have joined in the scheme. Every other chancery in Europe regarded Victor Emmanuel with suspicion and denounced Garibaldi as a brigand. The attitude of England caused dismay among the European diplomatists. But the service which she rendered at this supreme crisis to the cause of Italian unity was fully appreciated at the time in Italy, and has never since been forgotten. Thus in his message to King George on May 25, 1915, King Victor Emmanuel II happily referred to 'the ancient traditional friendship between the Italian and English peoples'.

The memory of that friendship has not faded from the minds of either people. On both sides there is a cordial hope that it may be renewed and cemented by comradeship in arms.[1] But it seems desirable to recall the attitude of England towards the Italian *Risorgimento* at a moment when we may be called upon to undertake the difficult and ungrateful task of arbitrating between friends.

The sympathy extended in this country towards the national aspirations of the Jugoslavs is more recent but not less cordial. If, indeed, the problem of the Balkan nationalities may be regarded as a unit, our interest in it must be dated back to the Hellenic revival of 1821. The Greek cause had no more enthusiastic advocates than those it found in England. Only recently, however, has popular sympathy been actively aroused in this country on behalf of a Greater Serbia. Not that this fact should cause any particular surprise. It is sufficient to refer to the speeches delivered and the articles indited after the delivery of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia on July 23, 1915. The vast majority of those speeches and articles betray little appreciation of the

[1] This essay was published, in substance, in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for December 1915.

peculiar significance to be attached to these new manifestations of the trend of Austrian diplomacy, still less of the supremely important rôle which it must fall to Serbia to play in a general European War. Even so late as July 30, 1914, an historian of high distinction, with special knowledge of modern European history, wrote to the present writer expressing his astonishment that 'it should be supposed that we are anxious to plunge into war for the *beaux yeux* of Serbian pig-dealers with swelled heads'. That his brusque words expressed the views current at that date among many Englishmen can hardly be questioned. Recent events have opened our eyes to the fact that the little Serbian nation have, with heroic endurance and self-sacrifice, barred the path of Mitteleuropa to the East. They have, it is true, fought primarily for their own national existence; they have also fought the battle of the whole Southern-Slavonic race, but they have fought not less certainly in the interests of the Western allies, and most of all in those of the British Empire.

This fact gives them a claim which no words can adequately measure not only to all the military assistance we can immediately afford, but to every possible consideration in the final re-settlement of the map of the Near East. The Habsburgs have always played with consummate adroitness and no inconsiderable success the game of dividing their enemies. The problem which we have to solve is how to unite our friends. It is a piece of rare good fortune for our opponents that the aspirations of Italia Irredenta and Serbia Irredenta should come into conflict in the Adriatic, that Bulgarian and Serbian ambitions should clash in Macedonia, that Roumanian interests should be at variance, in the east of the peninsula, both with those of Russia and Bulgaria, and that the Greek Irredentists should be profoundly jealous and suspicious of all other parties. But the obvious interest and policy of our enemies ought to render clearer and easier the recognition of our own. If theirs is to exacerbate differences, ours must be to appease and if possible to reconcile them.

How is this to be done in the case of the Adriatic? The

Jugoslavs recognize two claims on the part of Italy on the eastern coast: the cultural and the strategic.

'No sane Jugoslav', writes Dr. Watson, 'dreams of ousting Italian culture (from Dalmatia) as a spiritual force. . . . What they resent and will resist to the death is any attempt to employ that culture as the tool of Italianization, or as an excuse for imposing another alien yoke upon the Slav population. But otherwise they can be relied upon to offer adequate guarantees for the survival and proper treatment of the Italian minorities, and for complete linguistic liberty in their schools and in local cultural institutions.'[1]

Nor will they be niggardly in their recognition of Italy's right to exclusive naval supremacy in the Adriatic and to possession of the keys which shall safeguard it. Thus Sir Arthur Evans, who writes with peculiar authority and responsibility, has put it upon record that, as far as the Jugoslavs are concerned, Italy's claim will not be questioned to the Trentino or the Valley of the Isonzo (with which, of course, the Southern Slavs are not concerned), nor to Trieste, to western Istria with Pola, nor to Valona.[2] To these he is prepared to add 'as a supreme concession' the island of Lissa, which may be regarded as the key of the inner Adriatic, and in English hands proved its great value as a naval base during the latter years of the Napoleonic wars (1808–15). He would further be prepared to offer an additional guarantee to Italy in the shape of the dismantling of the fortifications at Sebenico and Cattaro and the perpetual neutralization of the Dalmatian coasts. Finally, it is understood that Italy may have the little island of Lussiapiccolo which 'covers the back of Pola and commands the entrance to the Quarnero and to the port of Fiume'.[3] The proffered concessions are certainly, from the Jugoslavic standpoint, on a generous scale, though it seems difficult to rate very highly the value of Dr. Watson's assurance that 'the new Jugoslavia will not merely have no navy, but no spare capital to invest in one'. For the moment this is indisputably true, and for some considerable time to come it is likely to remain so. But Italy, looking to a more distant future, may well

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 69. [2] *Manchester Guardian*, May 13, 1915.
[3] Seton Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

ask: How long? Secure in possession of all the essential naval keys of the Adriatic—Venice, Trieste, Pola, Lussiapiccolo, Lissa, Valona, and Brindisi—Italy will, however, be well advised not to press for an answer to a legitimate question. Apart from this point, will the concessions offered by Sir Arthur Evans and Dr. Watson satisfy the Italians?

Signor Virginio Gayda insists that the anti-Italian feelings of the Dalmatian Slavs have been fostered and indeed created by the machinations of the politicians at Vienna and Buda-Pesth. But he acknowledges their existence, and he admits that 'the Italian people must come to terms with the Slavs: they must not do violence to their national aspirations, their economic liberty. But it is', he adds, 'a question of restoring a just balance and the natural harmony between Italians and Slavs which existed before 1866, before the Austrian Government's new policy' (pp. 44–5).

Half a century ago Mazzini eloquently pleaded for a restoration of that 'natural harmony', and based his plea upon the grounds alike of morality and of expediency:

'The true aim of Italian international existence,' he wrote in 1871, 'the most direct path to her future greatness, lies higher up, there where the most vital European problem is fermenting to-day; in brotherhood with that vast element whose mission is to infuse a new spirit in the community of nations, or, if allowed by an improvident diffidence to go astray, to trouble it with long wars and grave dangers; it lies in an alliance with the family of Slavs. The Eastern limits of Italy were laid down in Dante's words:

'. . . . . a Pola presso del Quarnaro,
che Italia chiude e i suoi termini bagna

('"To Pola near the Quarnaro, which encloses Italy and washes her confines").

'Istria is ours. But from Fiume onward down the eastern coast of the Adriatic to the river Boiano on the borders of Albania there stretches a zone in which, amid the relics of our colonies, the Slav element predominates. This zone of the Adriatic shore includes Cattaro, Dalmatia, and the Montenegrin region. In conquering for the Slavs of Montenegro the outlet which they need at Cattaro, and for the Slavs of Dalmatia the principal towns of the eastern shore, thus assisting the resuscitation of the Illyrian Slavs, Italy would be the

first among nations to acquire the right of affection, of inspiration, and of economic advantages with the entire Slav family.'

Towards this accommodation both Italy and the representatives of Jugoslavia would seem, as an Italian publicist[1] has recently pointed out, to be veering to-day. There has lately been formed an Italo-Jugoslav Committee which has suggested the following basis of an understanding between the two peoples:

'1. An engagement on the part of the Italians and of the Jugoslavs to fight unremittingly in concert for the liberation of the Latin and Slav peoples of Austria-Hungary from the German-Magyar domination and from subjection to the house of Habsburg.

'2. Italians engage to support the movement of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes for the constitution of a united and independent national State.

'3. Recognition on the part of the Italians of the right of Jugoslavia to Dalmatia, and recognition on the part of the Jugoslavs of the right of Italy to union with Gorizia (il Goriziano), Trieste, and Istria to Monte Maggiore, and such of the Foranean Isles of the Dalmatian archipelago as are indispensable for the defence of the Italian coast.

'4. Reciprocal guarantees assuring freedom of culture and judicial equality to the Italian or Slav minorities remaining in the Italian or Jugoslav territories; the towns of Fiume and Zara to be constituted free cities with their own statutes.

'5. Integrity of Albania.

'6. All technical questions relating to territorial delimitations, judicial guarantees, and railroad and customs stipulations which cannot be settled directly by treaty between the two Governments concerned to be taken to arbitration.'[2]

Clearly tending in the same direction is the resolution embodied in the 'Pact of Rome', a document which was drawn up at a conference held in Rome in April 1918, and attended by 'the recognized spokesmen of the subject nationalities of the Central Empires assembled in solemn council

[1] Pietro Silva, Professor of History in the Livorno Naval Academy, in *The New Europe*, vol. vi, No. 78, pp. 401 *seq.*

[2] Cp. *op. cit.*, p. 405, where reference is also made to an exposition of this programme to be found in an Italian work published in March 1918, *La Questione dell' Adriatico*, by C. Maranelli and G. Savelmini (Florence, 1918).

in the capitol'. The conference, though obviously unofficial, was officially welcomed by Signor Orlando, the Italian Prime Minister, who, according to a document lately[1] issued by the Italian Information Bureau in London, is said to have 'endorsed this work of the new diplomacy of the people'.

The pertinent portion of this 'Pact of Rome' runs as follows:

'The representatives of the Italian nation and of the Jugoslav nation agree in particular as follows:

'I.—In the relations between the Italian nation and the nation of the Serbs, Croatians, and Slovenes—known also under the name of the Jugoslav nation—the representatives of the two peoples recognize that the unity and independence of the Jugoslav nation is a vital interest of Italy, just as the completion of Italian national unity is a vital interest of the Jugoslav nation. For this reason the representatives of the two peoples undertake to do all that may lie in their power so that both during the War and at the time of concluding peace these final ends of the two nations may be completely reached.

'II.—They declare that the liberation of the Adriatic Sea and its defence against the present or eventual enemy is a vital interest of the two peoples.

'III.—They undertake also to settle amicably and in the interests of the future good and sincere relations between the two peoples, the various territorial controversies on the basis of the principle of nationality and of the right of nations to decide their own fate, in such a manner as not to injure the vital interests of the two nations as they will be defined at the moment of concluding peace.

'IV.—Groups of one nation which will have to be included within the boundaries of another will be guaranteed the right to the respect of their language, their culture, and their moral and economic interests.'

Opinions may differ as to the precise degree of significance which ought to be attached to covenants concluded by the representatives of the 'New Diplomacy', but it is at least as easy to underrate as to overrate it. All the available evidence would appear to support the contention of those who discern the dawn of a new era in the relations of Italy and the Jugoslavs. Certain it is that the temper of Italy, though not less decided in the assertion of its own just

[1] 1918.

claims, is to-day (1918) more open than it was in 1915 to an appreciation of the claims put forward by its allies.

Meanwhile there has been and there can be no obscurity as to the attitude and the office of Great Britain. Bound as she is by the ties of ancient friendship to Italy, and at the same time deeply involved in gratitude and by her professed principles to the Jugoslavia of the future, it must be her part, by every possible means within her power, to assist the restoration of that 'just balance' and 'natural harmony' between Italians and Slavs which can alone solve the problem of the Adriatic.

For Great Britain and for the Allies in general it is a testing problem. We have constantly and with complete sincerity affirmed that between us and our enemies there is at stake a moral issue. We have invoked the principles of freedom, of justice, of nationality. No redrafting of the map of Europe can, we believe, be satisfactory in itself, or reasonably enduring, which does not defer to these principles, which fails to take account of the racial affinities, the historical traditions, the religious beliefs, the economic requirements, and the natural geographical definitions of the peoples who are primarily concerned. But difficulties inevitably arise when, as in the case of the Adriatic, one or more of these principles are mutually irreconcilable, and it is accentuated when there appears to be a conflict of principle, or even of interest, between two peoples who are united in the bonds of friendship and alliance each with the other and both with ourselves.

In the foregoing pages the problem of the Adriatic has been discussed almost exclusively in reference to the position and claims of Italy and of the Jugoslavs. There are, as was hinted, other elements in the problem. The continued possession of Trieste, Pola, and in a less degree of Fiume, is of vital importance to the Central Empires. None of these ports will be surrendered without a tremendous struggle, and except in the event of a complete victory achieved in the field by the Allies. Nor must it be forgotten that if the Allies are in a position to wrest from Austria-Hungary the possession of, or even to compel her to forgo

exclusive control over, these places, they will also be strong enough to make Germany relinquish her grip upon Constantinople, and to restore to Serbia the key of the gate to the Near East. This presupposes *la victoire intégrale*, just as the whole discussion demonstrates the unity of the problem with which the Allies are confronted. Victory on one front means victory on all; failure in one section of the world battle-field means failure in all; the battle must be won as a whole; the problem, if solved at all, will be solved in its integrity.

None the less it is important to remind ourselves that even that section of the single problem which we designate as the Adriatic Question is many-sided. It concerns not Italy and Jugoslavia and the Central Empires alone. Greece too is vitally concerned in its solution, and France and Great Britain hardly more remotely. We have already noted, in another connexion, the importance attached by General Bonaparte, as he then was, to the possession of the Ionian Isles. From the very outset of his career he saw the details of the whole picture in precise perspective. He saw the Ionian Isles in relation to the conquest of Egypt, and Egypt he regarded as an essential asset in his world contest with England. At a later stage of the Napoleonic wars we ourselves learnt to appreciate the strategical value of the island of Lissa. If, at the very beginning of the nineteenth century, when the meaning of India was but dimly realized, when Australasia meant to English ears a solitary convict settlement on the shores of Botany Bay, the Mediterranean could be regarded as among the nerve centres of the British Empire, how much more in the second decade of the twentieth?

To develop these hints would, however, carry us beyond the limits of this chapter. They are dropped in its concluding sentences lest any should be disposed to regard the problem of the Adriatic as a matter merely of local concern to the countries which fringe its shores, instead of being, as it is, an essential factor in a much larger whole; lest we should look upon its satisfactory solution as a side issue in the universal conflict. In this war there are in truth no side issues. A world problem must be solved by a world war.

CHAPTER XV

EPILOGUE

Projects of Peace: the Holy Alliance and the Concert of Europe

'The Holy Alliance set the tradition of that feeling of common interests among nations the growth of which is the strongest factor making for peace. It gave a new sanction to international law. . . . Last, but not least, it set the precedent for that Concert of Europe to which the world owes more than sometimes, in its more impatient moments, it has been willing to allow.'—W. Alison Phillips.

'Unless mankind learns from this war to avoid war the struggle will have been in vain. Over Humanity will loom the menace of destruction. . . . If the world cannot organize against war, if war must go on, then the nations can protect themselves henceforth only by using whatever destructive agencies they can invent, till the resources and inventions of science end by destroying the Humanity they were meant to serve.'—Viscount Grey of Fallodon.

'What we seek is the reign of law based upon the consent of the governed, and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind.'—Woodrow Wilson.

This book has been mainly concerned with problems of international politics; with the relations of State with State; and of each State to the larger Polity of which it forms a unit. The problems with which it has dealt have this much in common: they are the product of political conditions which have only subsisted for about four centuries; many of them are of much more recent origin, but all presuppose the continuance, in some form or another, of the existing international organization.

But the permanence of the present Polity has not passed unchallenged. 'Man', according to a proverbial aphorism, is said to be 'a fighting animal'. According to a much higher authority he is said to be 'by nature destined for membership

in a community'—a 'political animal'. The highest authority declares him to be 'made in the image of God'. Are the several attributes mutually compatible? It is at least worthy of notice that after each successive manifestation of man's fighting propensities on the great scale an attempt has been made to devise a method by which these propensities, so far as they issue in organized warfare, may be restrained, and by which the organizing authority, the Sovereign State, may itself be induced or compelled to forgo something of that Sovereignty whose wand can transmute the sordid crimes of piracy and murder into the high and ennobling virtues of patriotism and self-sacrifice. It is true that a small section of well-meaning but confused thinkers have been unable to draw a distinction between the taking of human life in pursuance of a private feud and the same act performed under superior orders in organized war; but such doctrines have not prevailed against the common sense of civilized mankind. Murder is murder; war is war. Nevertheless, the horrors of war, ever deepening with the advance of knowledge, with the increasing command of man over the forces of nature, and perpetrated on a scale more and more colossal in each successive war, have profoundly impressed themselves upon the conscience of mankind, and have stimulated the quest for some method of collective control over the unrestricted will of independent nations, for some means by which the chances of a recurrence of war may in the future be minimized if not avoided.

Of the innumerable projects for the organization of peace which emerged from the great wars of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, only one reached the point of embodiment in a definite and accepted scheme. It is the one associated, too often in ignorant derision, with the name of the Tsar Alexander I. Passing reference has already been made to the 'Holy Alliance', but the fact that it represents the only practical attempt ever made to apply the principles of Christianity to the regulation of international politics may justify more detailed examination of the genesis, the development, and the failure of a remarkable experiment.

On September 26, 1815, a great review of the Allied troops,

English, Russians, Austrians, and Prussians, was held near Châlons. The Tsar Alexander took the opportunity to proclaim to the world and commend to his allies a project which had long lain near his own heart and which had recently taken definite shape in the signature of a Treaty (September 14), to which he gave the name of The Holy Alliance.

We may briefly recall the situation. The Allied armies were for the second time in occupation of the French capital. The dramatic episode of the 'Hundred Days' had reached its climax at Waterloo; Napoleon was a prisoner in English custody, and the Sovereigns and Governments of Europe were engaged upon the difficult and delicate task of arranging the terms of what they hoped might be a durable peace for Europe and for France. For nearly a quarter of a century, with very brief interludes, Europe had been at war. There had been fighting in France, in the Netherlands, in Italy, in Germany, in Portugal and Spain, in Russia, in Egypt, in India, in South Africa, in North America, and on every sea. The European States-system was in ruins; houses, fields, and cities were laid waste; a whole generation of the peoples of Europe had groaned under the horrors of perpetual war, under the economic privations they were compelled to suffer, under the burdens, military and financial, which were laid upon them. No statesman whose heart was not utterly cold and hard could look without profound emotion upon their sufferings and sacrifices.

The heart of the Tsar Alexander was soft and impressionable. A mind disposed to mysticism, a conscience seared with the memory of a terrible crime,[1] had lately come under the influence of strong evangelical teaching. With the idealist aspirations of the Polish Prince Czartoryski, his most confidential counsellor, the Tsar had long been in sympathy; to these were now added the persuasive arguments of Madame de Krüdener, and the time seemed propitious for a bold experiment.

Then, as now, the prevailing mood was an exalted one; then,

[1] The Tsar Paul was murdered in 1801, and that Alexander was privy to the plot against him is certain. 'This ineffaceable blot', says Czartoryski, 'attached itself like a canker to his conscience.'

as now, there was a serious appeal for the 'mobilization of spiritual forces'; then, as now, it was believed that an opportunity, not likely to recur, had opened for putting international relations upon a more satisfactory basis. It was, indeed, only natural that men who had just emerged from the horrors of a prolonged war should cast about for the means of securing a lasting peace.

To the Tsar and to Frederick William III of Prussia it was not less natural to base their hopes upon the 'sublime truths which the holy religion of our Saviour teaches'. Together with the Emperor of Austria they solemnly declared

'that the present Act [the Act of the Holy Alliance][1] has no other object than to publish, in the face of the whole world, their fixed resolution . . . to take for their sole guide the precepts of that Holy Religion—namely, the precepts of Justice, Christian Charity, and Peace—which, far from being applicable only to private concerns, must have an immediate influence upon the counsels of Princes and guide all their steps. . . . Conformably to the words of the Holy Scriptures . . . the three monarchs will remain united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble fraternity.'

They further undertook to 'consider themselves all as members of one and the same Christian nation'; they exhorted their several peoples 'to strengthen themselves more and more in the principles and exercise of the duties which the Divine Saviour has taught to mankind'; and they assured all Powers avowing similar principles that they would be received 'with equal ardour and affection into this Holy Alliance'.

Alike by contemporary statesmen and by later critics the Holy Alliance and its founder have been very hardly judged. Metternich, until he perceived its latent possibilities, looked upon the whole thing with cynical contempt, and described it as 'a loud-sounding nothing'. Castlereagh, to whose critical intellect enthusiasm was unintelligible, described the Act as a 'piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense', and questioned the sanity of its author. Canning was more suspicious of his sincerity.

Nor was the attitude of contemporary statesmen unnatural.

[1] For full text cf. Hertslet's *Map of Europe by Treaty*.

The recent record of the Tsar Alexander could not fail to inspire mistrust; his alliance with Prussia; his sudden *volte-face* and his partnership in the Napoleonic conspiracy of Tilsit; his breach with France and the espousal of the national cause in Germany; his extreme sensibility to external influences: now Czartoryski's, now Napoleon's, now Stein's, now Madame de Krüdener's—all this seemed to argue instability of character if not something worse. Nor was the language of the 'Act' such as to commend itself to diplomatists; it spake in a tongue to which they were unaccustomed and which they could not understand. Was such language intended merely to check ambitions exceptionally crafty and far-reaching? The Castlereaghs and Cannings might well have been excused for thinking so. And if contemporaries were justified in regarding it with suspicion, still more intelligible is the condemnation of later commentators. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* The historian looks back upon a rapid declension from exalted principles; a cynical perversion of sublime truths; Metternich's complete capture of the mind of Alexander; his skilful adaptation of the machinery of the alliance to the suppression of popular movements; the maintenance of tyranny in Naples; the destruction of liberty in Lombardy; the failure to conciliate the Poles; the perfect orgy of reaction into which one Bourbon ally plunged the Two Sicilies, and another Bourbon ally plunged Spain.[1]

Yet, there is no reason to doubt that at the moment when he promulgated the *Act of the Holy Alliance* the Tsar was as completely sincere as a man of such mixed motives and unstable will was capable of being. Nor were the ideas embodied in the *Act of the Holy Alliance* the result of a recent inspiration. The Tsar's tutor had been one César de La Harpe, an ardent disciple of Rousseau. Through him Alexander had become acquainted with Rousseau's criticism of the peace project of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre. That project, so Rousseau had argued, was childish, 'without a Henri the Fourth or a Sully to carry it out'. In the fullness of time the seed sown by

[1] The alliance was joined by Louis XVIII of France, and by the Bourbon Kings of Spain and the Two Sicilies.

La Harpe germinated in the mind of Alexander. It was he, Alexander Tsar of all the Russias, who was destined by Providence to fulfil the Design of Henri the Fourth, to put into practice the principles enunciated by the Abbé de Saint-Pierre. His friend and confidant Czartoryski should be another Sully.

In 1804 negotiations were in progress for the formation of the third coalition against Napoleon, and in order to cement the alliance the Tsar dispatched his friend Nikolai Nikolaievich Novosiltsov as a special envoy to England. The envoy's instructions[1] contain the germ of the Holy Alliance and demand close attention. The Tsar's aim was declared to be to fix on firm and lasting foundations the future peace of Europe.

'It seems to me [he wrote] that this great aim cannot be looked upon as attained until, on the one hand, the nations have been attached to their Governments, by making these incapable of acting save in the greatest interest of the people subject to them, and on the other the relations of States to each other have been fixed on more precise rules and such as it is to their mutual interest to respect. . . . Nothing would prevent at the conclusion of peace a treaty being arranged which would become the basis of the reciprocal relations of the European States. It is no question of realizing the dream of perpetual peace, but one could attain at least to some of its results if, at the conclusion of the general War, one could establish on clear, precise principles the prescriptions of the rights of nations. Why could one not submit to it the positive rights of nations, assure the privilege of neutrality, insert the obligation of never beginning war until all the resources which the mediation of a third party could offer have been exhausted, until the grievances have by this means been brought to light, and an effort to remove them has been made? On principles such as these one could proceed to a general pacification and give birth to a league of which the stipulations would form, so to speak, a new code of the law of nations, which, sanctioned by the greater part of the nations of Europe, would, without difficulty, become the immutable rule of the Cabinets, while those who should try to infringe it would risk bringing upon themselves the forces of the new union.'

In the speech with which the King opened Parliament

[1] Printed in full in Czartoryski's *Memoirs*: long extracts and full analysis will be found in Phillips, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 sq., from which I quote.

(January 15, 1805) cordial reference was made to the Emperor of Russia, 'who has given the strongest proofs of the wise and dignified sentiments with which he is animated, and of the warm interest which he takes in the safety and independence of Europe'.

Four days later (January 19) Pitt made a confidential reply to the Note presented to him by Novosiltsov. He first expressed satisfaction that the sentiments of Russia coincided so exactly with those of Great Britain, and emphasized his wish to 'form the closest union with the Emperor' to secure the safety of Europe. He then defined with precision the objects to be kept in view: (1) To reduce France to the limits of 1792; (2) to provide for the 'tranquillity and happiness' of the territories thus recovered from France, and to 'establish a barrier against the future projects of aggrandizement of that Power'. Finally, having discussed in detail the territorial readjustments necessary to attain these ends, and particularly to secure the future peace of Europe, he concluded: 'It appears necessary that there should be concluded, at the period of a general pacification, a general treaty, by which the European Powers should mutually guarantee each other's possessions. Such a treaty would lay the foundation in Europe of a system of public right, and would contribute as much as seems possible to repress future enterprises directed against the general tranquillity; and, above all, to render abortive every project of aggrandizement similar to those which have produced all the disasters of Europe since the calamitous era of the French Revolution.'[1]

To the ideas adumbrated in the instructions to Novosiltsov the Tsar Alexander remained constant during the years that followed. He recurs to them in the preamble to the Treaty of Kalisch concluded between Russia and Prussia on the eve of the War of Liberation (February 28, 1813): 'In leading his victorious troops beyond his own borders the first idea of H.M. the Emperor of all the Russias was to . . . fulfil the

[1] The full text of this document, described by Alison as 'the most remarkable state-paper in the whole Revolutionary war', is printed in his *History of Europe*, vol. vi, Appendix A, p. 667.

destinies on which depend the happiness and repose of the peoples exhausted by so much unrest and so many sacrifices. The time will come when treaties shall be more than truces, when it will again be possible for them to be observed with that religious faith, that sacred inviolability, on which depends the reputation, the strength, and the preservation of Empires.' Nearly a year later, when the liberation of Germany had been successfully achieved and the Tsar with his allies was about to cross the Rhine, the same principle was reaffirmed, and the Tsar declared his fixed resolve to place all the nations 'under the safeguard of a general alliance'. Finally, in Paris, when the text of the Holy Alliance had been actually drafted, the Tsar wrote to Madame de Krüdener: 'I want the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia to join me in this act of adoration in order that the world may see us, like the Magi of the East, recognizing the authority of God our Saviour. You will unite with me in prayer to God that He will dispose the hearts of my allies to sign.' As M. Malet pertinently writes: 'Croire que l'alliance fût fondée pour restreindre les droits des peuples, et favoriser l'absolutisme, c'était calomnier les intentions les plus pures des souverains.'[1]

What was the attitude of the British Government towards the project of the Tsar? In the Holy Alliance England had no formal part. The Prince-Regent, not being a sovereign, was technically ineligible for membership, but he wrote to his 'brothers' to express his cordial assent to the sublime principles enunciated by the Tsar. But it is at this point necessary to distinguish clearly between the *Holy Alliance* proper (September 14, 1815) and the *Quadruple Treaty*, concluded on November 20, 1815, between Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia. For the Quadruple Treaty, Castlereagh was primarily responsible. As it is frequently confounded with the more famous but much less important Treaty of September, it is important to scrutinize closely its genesis and its provisions.

In December 1813 Castlereagh went out in person to the Allied Headquarters to represent the British Government.

[1] Ap. Lavisse et Rambaud, *Histoire Générale*, x, p. 67.

His instructions, conceived in the spirit of Pitt's memorandum quoted above, define in the most explicit terms the attitude which Great Britain was to assume; and conclude with the following paragraph: 'The Treaty of Alliance is not to terminate with the War, but is to contain defensive engagements, with mutual obligations to support the Power attacked by France with a certain extent of stipulated succours. The *casus foederis* is to be an attack by France on the European dominions of any one of the contracting parties.'[1]

Nothing could be more clear-cut or precise. This paragraph was the basic principle of the Treaty of Chaumont (March 1, 1814), and of the Treaty of Vienna (March 25, 1815). It reappears in the Quadruple Treaty of November 20. Therein the signatory Powers solemnly renewed their adherence to the Treaties of Chaumont and Vienna, they mutually guaranteed the Second Treaty of Paris, and finally, in order to

'facilitate and secure the execution of the present Treaty and to consolidate the connections which at the present moment so closely unite the four Sovereigns for the happiness of the world,' they agreed to 'renew their meetings at fixed periods . . . for the purpose of consulting upon their common interests and for the consideration of the measures which at each of these periods shall be considered the most salutary for the repose and prosperity of nations and for the maintenance of the peace of Europe'.[2]

Such were the principal stipulations of the famous treaty which really laid the foundation of that 'Concert of Europe' which governed the international relations of the European States until 1822, and which exercised a considerable though diminishing influence upon them for a still longer period.

With the general principle of a European Concert one must needs sympathize profoundly; and not less with the heroic attempt to embody the principle in a workable and effective scheme. But it is undeniable that the scheme, unless carefully worked and vigilantly watched, might, under the guise of promoting international peace, and even in pursuance of a serious endeavour to promote it, gravely menace the cause of

[1] Phillips, p. 67.
[2] For full text cf. Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, i. 372–5.

political liberty in individual States. Lord Castlereagh was from the first keenly alive to the danger which lurked in the specious proposals of the Tsar. This is manifest from the circular-letter which, in December 1815, he addressed to the British representatives at foreign Courts: 'In the present state of Europe it is the province of Great Britain *to turn the confidence she has inspired to the account of peace*, by exercising a conciliatory influence upon the Powers rather than put herself at the head of any combination of Courts to keep others in check.'[1]

How did Alexander's project in practice work? The answer to this question possesses an interest which is much more than merely academic or historical. During the seven years which followed the overthrow of Napoleon at Waterloo, a definite and formal attempt was made to control the international relations of the European States by a system of periodical Congresses.[2] The first of these Congresses met at Aix-la-Chapelle in September 1818.

The Sovereigns of Russia, Austria, and Prussia were present in person. Among the accredited diplomatists were Castlereagh and Wellington, Metternich from Austria, Hardenberg and Bernstorff from Prussia, Nesselrode and Capo D'Istria from Russia. The Duc de Richelieu, Prime Minister of France, was also admitted in order that he might submit to the august allies an earnest plea that France might be forthwith relieved from the humiliation and expense of maintaining the army of occupation. The consideration of this question was indeed the primary purpose of the Congress. The Treaty of Paris had provided that 'the military occupation of France might cease at the end of three years' if the Allies approved. The decision really rested with the Duke of Wellington, and the Duke advised that the 'army of occupation might, without danger to France herself and to the peace of Europe, be withdrawn'. The Congress accepted his advice; France,

[1] Cf. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, xi. 105.

[2] For details of this experiment reference may be made to the *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. x, c. i; to Lavisse et Rambaud, *op. cit.*, x, c. ii; or to the present writer's *England since Waterloo*, Bk. i, c. iii.

backed by the great financial houses of Baring and Hope, entered into renewed engagements for the payment of the unliquidated claims of the Allies, and by the end of the year not a single foreign soldier was encamped upon the soil of France. At the same time France was formally readmitted to the polite society of Europe, and thus the Quadruple Alliance of 1815 was converted into the 'Moral Pentarchy' of 1818. But when the Treaty of November 1815 was renewed it was not renewed in its original form. Experience had already suggested to the cautious mind of Castlereagh certain modifications. The three years which had elapsed since 1815 had tended to confirm the suspicions of the British Government. It had become manifest that Metternich was bent upon exploiting the Concert of Europe in the interests of repression and reaction. Founded to maintain international peace, the Concert was to be utilized 'as a sort of European police for the suppression of liberal movements'. The reactionary movement was already making rapid progress in France, in Germany, in Italy, and above all in Spain. The machinery of the European Concert might prove very useful both in furthering the cause of reaction and, by timely intervention, in quelling any incipient insurrections which the reactionary policy of the restored Sovereigns might provoke. As regards France, all the Allies were in complete accord, and agreed by a secret Protocol to confer 'on the most effectual means of arresting the fatal effects of a new revolutionary convulsion with which France may be threatened'.[1] But to any general extension of the principle of intervention in the domestic concerns of independent States the English Government presented an adamantine front. Even in pre-Reform days an English Cabinet had a wholesome fear of Parliament. 'We must recollect,' as Lord Liverpool wrote to Castlereagh, 'and ought to make our allies feel, that the general and European discussion of these questions will be in the British Parliament.' It was no easy task to make this clearly understood at Aix-la-Chapelle, and there is a touch of humour in Castlereagh's retort that the Tsar Alexander,

[1] Wellington, *Supp. Despatches*, xii. 835–7.

'having only passed *one day* in a Polish Parliament, has no very clear notion of what can be hazarded in a British House of Commons'.

The general result of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle was a renewal of the Alliance of 1815 in more general terms. The allied Sovereigns expressed 'their invariable resolution never to depart either among themselves or in their relations with other States from the strictest observation of the principles of the right of nations'. In a Protocol of the same date (November 15, 1818) it was specifically laid down that the 'government by Congresses' was not to be systematized. If circumstances should arise which rendered a meeting desirable, it was, of course, to be held, but the doctrine that the Great Powers were to exercise a perpetual and continuous surveillance over the domestic affairs of their smaller neighbours or of each other was, thanks mainly to Castlereagh, definitely and firmly repudiated. Castlereagh's caution demanded even more than this, and at his instance it was further provided that in the case of meetings called to consider the affairs of any of the smaller States 'they shall only take place in pursuance of a formal invitation on the part of such of those States as the said affairs may concern, and under the express reservation of their right of direct participation therein'. No paper securities for the independence of the small States could have been more precise, and it was no fault of Castlereagh's if, in the event, they proved insufficient. It was at one time the fashion to allege against Castlereagh a disposition to 'tie England to the tail of the Holy Alliance'; and the fashion is not wholly obsolete. No accusation could be more demonstrably unfair. That Castlereagh adhered to the 'Concert' is true; to have broken it up would, in view of the circumstances of the time, have been 'a crime against the civilization of Europe'. That danger lurked in the experiment no one knew better than Castlereagh, and no one was at so much pains to avert that danger and to restrain the operations of the Alliance within well-defined and salutary limits. So soon as it transgressed them Great Britain broke away. That time was not long in coming.

In no country in Europe had the shock of reaction after 1815 been felt so violently as in Spain. Ferdinand VII, of all the Spanish Bourbons the most contemptible, had been welcomed back to the throne with limitless enthusiasm. But not even Spanish loyalty was proof against the combination of weakness and cruelty which he displayed. By 1820 his popularity was exhausted ; the flag of insurrection was unfurled at Cadiz, and from an orgy of reaction the Spaniards characteristically plunged into an orgy of revolution. From Spain the revolutionary infection spread to Portugal and Naples. Alexander of Russia was burning to throw a Russian army into the Peninsula ; Metternich was determined to restore order in Southern Italy. Both hoped to obtain for their several enterprises the sanction of the allied Powers. In regard to Naples, Austria had by treaty a certain right of interference ; in regard to Spain, Alexander had no rights save such as could be deduced from the principles accepted at Aix-la-Chapelle. Castlereagh was determined that the latter should not be perverted to that end. As regards Russian intervention in Spain he was successful, but against his wishes a Conference to consider the whole situation met at Troppau (Oct. 20, 1820).

At Troppau the Tsar met Metternich and made his complete renunciation. 'To-day', he said, 'I deplore all that I have said and done between the years 1814 and 1818.' The surrender to Metternich was unconditional. Once more the Muscovite leopard changed his skin. The lessons in liberalism imbibed from La Harpe, from Stein, from Czartoryski, from Capo D'Istria, were in an instant forgotten ; the Tsar was now the determined opponent of all progressive movements, the sworn ally, the abject slave of Metternich. Such was the temperament of this well-meaning but shallow and impressionable Sovereign.

In strong contrast to the volatile temper of the Tsar was the calm and consistent attitude of Castlereagh. Lord Stewart, the British Ambassador at Vienna, was sent to Troppau with a 'watching brief', but in the proceedings of the Congress Great Britain declined to take any formal part. Her policy,

as defined by Lord Castlereagh, was from first to last unequivocal and consistent. If Austrian interests were threatened by events in Italy, Austria might intervene to protect them, provided that 'she engages in this undertaking with no views of aggrandizement' and that 'her plans are limited to objects of self-defence'.[1] But to anything in the nature of concerted action on the part of the Pentarchy Castlereagh was unalterably opposed. Not that he was in any sense a friend to revolution. His primary, if not his sole, consideration was the maintenance of the peace of Europe, and that peace was, in his judgement, less likely to be jeopardized by domestic revolution than by the armed intervention of the Great Powers. To any concerted intervention in Italy or Spain Castlereagh was now, as always, inflexibly opposed, and the refusal of England to assent to it virtually broke up the 'Moral Pentarchy' established at Aix-la-Chapelle. But the original Holy Allies went on their way unheeding; and on November 19, 1820, the three Eastern Powers promulgated the Protocol of Troppau.

This document contained a startling revelation of the fundamental doctrines of the Holy Alliance, according to the revised version.

'States [it declared] which have undergone a change of government due to revolution, the result of which threatens other States, *ipso facto* cease to be members of the European Alliance, and remain excluded from it until their situation gives guarantee for legal order and stability. . . . If, owing to such alterations, immediate danger threatens other States, the Powers bind themselves by peaceful means, or, if need be, by arms, to bring back the guilty State into the bosom of the Great Alliance.'

The precise terms of this declaration are, in view of proposals which are again commanding a considerable measure of popular approval, worthy of close attention. It contains a naked avowal of the principle of intervention, sustained, of course, by the loftiest principles. There is to be a *tribunal*, else how can a State be adjudged 'guilty'? And the tribunal

[1] Castlereagh to Stewart, September 16, 1820. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, xii. 311.

is to possess a sanction. Its decrees are to be enforced by a European police. The Allies were straightforward and logical. They did not shrink from the consequences of their principles. They were under no illusion as to the sufficiency of 'moral' sanctions, or the efficacy of an 'international public opinion'. They saw whither they were going.

So did Castlereagh. The Allied Sovereigns, conscious of the susceptibilities which the Declaration of Troppau would be likely to arouse, more particularly in England, issued (December 8, 1820) an explanatory circular. They asserted that 'the Powers have exercised an undeniable right in concerting together upon means of safety against those States in which the overthrow of a Government caused by revolution could only be considered as a dangerous example, which could only result in a hostile attitude against constitutional and legitimate Governments', and they expressed a confident hope that 'the good will of all right-minded men will no doubt follow the allied Courts in the noble arena in which they are about to enter'.[1] The Government of Great Britain was not allured by the prospect of the 'noble arena', and very emphatically declined to make itself a party to the measures which would be 'in direct repugnance to the fundamental laws of this country'. Castlereagh admitted the *individual* right of Austria to interfere in Naples, but he denounced the principles enunciated at Troppau on the ground that they

'would inevitably sanction . . . a much more extensive interference in the internal transactions of States than can be reconcilable either with the general interest or with the efficient authority and dignity of independent Sovereigns'.

But Metternich went on his way. The Conference adjourned from Troppau to Laibach, a small town in Austrian Carniola; to Laibach Ferdinand of Naples was summoned to give an account, at the judgement-seat of the Holy Allies, of his dealings with his turbulent subjects. Sentence was duly delivered, and Austria, as the executive of the European

[1] The text of this important memorandum and the reply of the British Government will be found in Hertslet, *op. cit.*, pp. 659 sq.

police, was entrusted with the congenial task of restoring order in Southern Italy. Fifty thousand white-coats were marched into Naples; stern vengeance was executed upon all who had taken part in the constitutional movement; the principles of legitimacy were triumphantly asserted. and a régime was re-established in Naples, which was subsequently described by Mr. Gladstone as 'an outrage upon religion, upon civilization, upon humanity, and upon decency'. Chastened and purified 'the guilty State was brought back into the bosom of the Great Alliance'.

These were the proceedings which evoked the famous protest from Lord Castlereagh formally repudiating the principles of the Holy Alliance and defining with precision the attitude of his own country. 'England', he wrote, 'stands pledged to uphold the territorial arrangements established at the Congress of Vienna. . . . But with the internal affairs of each separate State we have nothing to do. We could neither share in nor approve, though we might not feel called upon to resist, the intervention of one ally to put down internal disturbances in the dominions of another. We have never committed ourselves to any such principle as that, and we must as a general rule protest against it.'

'We might not feel called upon to resist.' So Castlereagh; but not so Canning, who in 1822 succeeded to the place vacated by Castlereagh's unhappy death. Where Castlereagh protested, Canning, with less logical consistency but with more practical effect, vigorously acted. It is ridiculous to seek, as so many historical critics have sought, to discover a revolution in English foreign policy in 1822. There was no revolution; there was in principle not even a deviation. Canning adopted without modification not merely the principles of Castlereagh: he actually adopted as his own the written instructions which his predecessor had prepared for his own guidance at the Congress of Verona. But in the method of application there was a vast difference between the two men: Castlereagh protested against the Holy Alliance; Canning broke it.

At the Congress of Verona—the last of the series—Great

Britain was represented by the Duke of Wellington. Through his mouth Canning bluntly told the Powers that, while 'there was no sympathy and would be none between England and revolutionists and Jacobins', England would insist upon 'the right of nations to set up over themselves whatever form of government they thought best, and to be left free to manage their own affairs so long as they left other nations to manage theirs'. Further: the Duke was instructed, in the event of a resolution of joint action in Spain, 'come what might, to refuse the King's consent to become a party to it, even if the dissolution of the Alliance should be the result of the refusal'.

The obnoxious resolution was, as Canning had foreseen, adopted; England abruptly refused assent; and her refusal virtually broke up the Alliance. From that moment the Concert was at an end. The Duke of Wellington's protest sufficed to stop the project of joint intervention in Spain. He failed, however, to avert the individual intervention of France. But Canning was ready with his counterstroke. 'I sought', he said, 'materials of compensation in another hemisphere. . . . I resolved that if France had Spain it should not be Spain with the Indies. I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old.' The language may be a trifle magniloquent; but the fact which it emphasized was of undeniable significance. On January 1, 1825, the Powers were informed that Great Britain had recognized the independence of 'those countries of America which appear to have established their separation from Spain'.

The League of Autocrats was not to be permitted to extend its influence over the New World. The interests of England forbade it. And for Canning that was enough. To him the consideration of English interests had always been paramount. Even in his anti-Jacobin days he had shown profound contempt for those invertebrate cosmopolitans who, under the guise of universal philanthropy, love to vilify their own countrymen. But it is not given to every one with equal felicity and vigour to

Lash the vile impostures from the land.

As in the following lines from the *New Morality*:

> First, stern Philanthropy—not she who dries
> The orphan's tears, and wipes the widow's eyes;
> . . . . . .
> But French philanthropy, whose boundless mind
> Glows with the general love of all mankind—
> Philanthropy, beneath whose baneful sway
> Each patriot passion sinks, and dies away.
> Taught in her school to imbibe her mawkish strain,
> Condorcet filtered through the dregs of Paine;
> Each pert adept disowns a Briton's part,
> And plucks the name of England from his heart.
>
> What! Shall a name, a word, a sound control
> The aspiring thought, and cramp the expansive soul?
> Shall one half-peopled island's rocky round
> A love that glows for all creation bound?
> . . . . . .
> No—through the extended globe his feelings run,
> As broad and general as the unbounded sun!
> No narrow bigot he—his reasoned view—
> Thy interests, England, ranks with thine, Peru!
> . . . . . .
> A sturdy patriot of the world alone,
> The friend of every country but his own.

Canning's youthful sentiments do not differ widely from that expressed in his famous speech at Plymouth in 1823: 'I hope I have as friendly a disposition towards the other nations of the earth as any one who vaunts his philanthropy most highly, but I am contented to confess that in the conduct of political affairs the grand object of my contemplation is the interest of England. Not, gentlemen, that the interest of England is an interest which stands isolated and alone. The situation which she holds forbids an exclusive selfishness. Her prosperity must contribute to the prosperity of surrounding nations, and her stability to the safety of the world.' But to do this it was essential that England should 'move steadily on in her own orbit'. With such independence the whole system of alliances inaugurated at Chaumont was inconsistent. Canning was determined to rid himself of the entanglement. In her own orbit England, consequently, moved, in relation

to all the difficult questions which arose in Greece, in Portugal, in Old and New Spain.

The Tsar Alexander, Metternich, and Frederick William the Third continued to act in concert for some years longer, though the accord was severely strained by the outbreak of the Greek insurrection and the subsequent development of events in Eastern Europe. But in 1825 Alexander died, and was succeeded by his brother Nicholas. The new Tsar was a man of very different temper from his predecessor. In his case there was no need to scratch the Russ before you found the Tartar. Of fine presence and genial manners, Nicholas was a pure autocrat. To him *Realpolitik* meant more than mysticism. With his accession Alexander's experiment collapsed; the Holy Alliance was to all intents and purposes at an end.

As an experiment in the organization of peace the Holy Alliance was, it must be confessed, an irreparable failure. None the less the history of the experiment would seem to be pregnant with instruction for the statesmen and the peoples of our own day. It is important, therefore, to probe the reasons for its failure.

One reason commonly suggested may be dismissed at once. It is true that the Holy Alliance rapidly degenerated into a league of autocrats. But autocracy was not of the essence of the experiment; nor was it the cause of its failure. Nor may we ascribe that failure to the character of the founder of the alliance. Alexander was no hypocrite. His character revealed a curious but not uncommon blend of shrewd ambition and spiritual exaltation, but there is no reason to doubt that he was, in 1815, sincerely anxious to inaugurate a régime of peace and righteousness among the States which made up the European Polity. He believed, and under the circumstances not unreasonably, that this end could be best attained by a league of Sovereigns pledged to conduct internal affairs according to the plain precepts of the Gospel of Christ.

Nor again can the failure be attributed to the chill caution of Castlereagh, to the 'Jacobinism' of Canning, or to the

insular selfishness characteristic at all times, according to hostile critics, of the country they successively represented in the councils of Europe. It is true that Castlereagh watched the development of Alexander's scheme with a jealous regard to the liberty and independence of the smaller States; it is true that Canning was resolved, in view of the clear indications that the Holy Allies were bent upon the suppression of liberalism in Europe, that England should 'move steadily on in her own orbit', affording, as she moved, every encouragement to the development of free institutions, and to the emergence of young nations untrammelled by the yoke of alien despotisms, and unhampered by connexion with European Powers, too distant or too lethargic or too effete to secure to them the compensating advantages of ordered government and intelligent administration; but it is not true that either Castlereagh or Canning frustrated an experiment which retained any trace of its pristine purity of intention or held out any hope of fulfilling a useful purpose in the future. For the real reasons for the breakdown of the European Concert we must look deeper.

A fundamental reason is to be found in the unsatisfactory character of the after-war settlement effected by the diplomatists at Vienna. Justice must precede peace. Nothing could be more vain than the attempt to form a League of Peace except upon the basis of an international and territorial settlement which gives reasonable satisfaction to all parties, or at least to all whom it is intended to include in the League. No settlement can give perfect satisfaction, and the more extravagant criticisms directed against the statesmen of 1815 have been largely discounted by the more responsible critics. Charges of sheer malevolence and wilful perversity cannot be sustained. The Metternichs and Nesselrodes and Talleyrands did not discern the forces destined in the near future to dominate the fortunes of States and peoples. They were not, perhaps, quick even to apprehend the things that belonged to their own peace. But they sincerely desired to effect a settlement which should secure to an exhausted world a period of repose and recuperation after the turmoil and upheaval of the last quarter of a century. Such measure of success as they

attained was eminently partial and temporary. The settlement which emerged from the Congress of Vienna was based upon the ideas and principles which had inspired governments and had regulated the international relations of States during the eighteenth century. Of these perhaps the two most potent were the interests of ruling families and the theory of the balance of power, though a desire for commercial outlets and an ambition to dominate the new world of the Far West and the old world of the Far East were not without their influence in determining the relations of the Powers of Western Europe. Not until the close of the eighteenth century was modern liberalism begotten by the revolutions in North America and in France. Not until the dawn of the nineteenth did the nascent principle of nationality begin really to emerge as a formative factor in the life of States. The settlement of 1815 ignored, if it did not defy, both principles. But neither waited long for its revenge.

Before fifteen years had passed there was hardly a State which had not had experience of the consequences of an attempt to repress the new leaven of political liberty so potently working among the peoples of Europe. Where the reaction of 1815 had been most violent, as in Spain and Italy, the new leaven worked, as we have seen, not towards reform but towards revolution, and in 1830 a signal was hoisted in Paris which evoked a response of one kind or another in most of the smaller capitals in Europe.

Even more serious were the uprisings of 1848. Not only because they were on a larger scale, but because they raised larger issues. In 1830 the peoples responded to the cry of political liberty, in 1848 they invoked the principle of nationality. It was, naturally, in the composite empire of the Habsburgs that the crisis of 1848 was most acutely felt. Czechs, Magyars, Slovaks, and Italians, all began to lisp the lesson of self-determination, and when that lesson is completely learnt the Austrian Empire will cease to be. But neither in the Habsburg dominions nor elsewhere did the risings of 1848 attain ultimate success. The Republic set up in France did not maintain itself much longer than those of Vienna and

Rome. By a curious irony, the *coup d'état* which re-established the Empire in France ultimately brought emancipation to Italy. For the moment, however, the Habsburg yoke was riveted afresh upon the Italian provinces; revolution collapsed in Bohemia and Austria, and Hungary was, with the help of Russia, reconquered. The year of revolution did little for the cause of liberty in Germany and nothing for that of national unity. Yet the seeds of liberalism and nationality were germinating. They had not been uprooted by the reactionary settlement of 1815, nor washed away by the revolutionary flood of 1848. Their continued vitality must be accounted the first reason for the failure of a Peace project which ignored their existence.

A second, though subsidiary reason is to be found in the character of Metternich, and in the influence which he was, in increasing degree, able to exert over the unstable though not ungenerous nature of the Tsar Alexander. The mystical in Alexander genuinely longed for the reign of righteousness and peace; but the autocrat was terrified by the manifestations of a revolutionary temper in so many of the States which were embraced in the 'bosom of the Great Alliance'. Upon these fears Metternich worked with consummate adroitness and complete success. The Tsar, responding to Metternich's monitions, just as at any earlier stage he had responded to those of La Harpe and Capo D'Istria, cast the slough of liberalism and emerged as the reactionary. Frederick William III was as putty in the hands of his masterful confederates, and thus the Tsar's change of temper was quickly reflected in the policy of the Alliance. The aspirations of Paris degenerated into the repressive doctrines of Troppau; and if Metternich burned to suppress revolution in Southern Italy, the Tsar showed equal ardour in the same sacred crusade in Spain.

Upon this rock the Holy Alliance ultimately foundered. The dilemma was not unreal. Could revolution be regarded as a mere matter of domestic concern to the individual State? Had France been able or willing to confine the operation of the new doctrines proclaimed in 1789 within her own frontiers? Had she not, in the name of Liberty and Fraternity, declared

war by the propagandist decrees issued in the autumn of 1792 upon every existing Government in Europe whether the form of the Governments were liberal or autocratic? After such an experience was it possible to deny that the results of revolution in one State might menace the stability of government in other States? If by its own deliberate act one State forfeited its place in the League of Nations, was it not incumbent upon the allied Powers to bring back the guilty State, by peaceful means, 'into the bosom of the Great Alliance'? And 'if peaceful means should fail', what then? Was there to be no 'sanction' behind the decrees of the august international tribunal? Must there not be, in the last resort, recourse to arms? If such recourse were prohibited would not the futility of the League stand self-confessed?

These were and are obstinate questionings. They penetrate to the heart of the difficulties which confronted the Holy Alliance, and which must confront any attempt to erect now or in the future any super-national authority. Lord Castlereagh categorically refused to admit the right of intervention. Revolution was a matter of purely domestic concern. 'With the internal affairs of each separate State we have nothing to do.' The dogma laid down by Castlereagh has been accepted in terms by every liberal-minded statesman in Europe from that day to this; to it was assigned a foremost place in the sacred canon of English diplomacy. But his immediate successors in Whitehall found the distinction which Castlereagh drew difficult to maintain. Even by Canning, still more by Palmerston, the principle of non-intervention was more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Where does the province of 'internal affairs' end and that of 'external affairs' begin?

The question must be pressed, for it is obvious that a doctrine which can be maintained against a League of Kings must hold equally good against a League of Nations. Is the principle laid down at Troppau to be affirmed or denied? Are the leagued democracies to bind themselves to bring back a 'guilty State' 'by peaceful means or, if need be, by arms' into the bosom of the League of Peace? The new league, if it comes into being, is to be a league not of autocrats but of free nations.

'Democracy' is to be a qualification, it would seem, of membership. Unless such a test is imposed and enforced, one of the chief obstacles which the Holy Alliance encountered is only too likely to be found in the path of the League of Nations. In the Concert of 1815 a limited monarchy, like England, had a place beside autocracies like Russia and Austria. With what result? That as soon as a really difficult and testing question arose at Troppau, the Concert ceased to be harmonious, and the individual players played each their own tune. But even if it be made a condition of membership that each constituent State shall enjoy democratic institutions, that all shall be in respect of government *eiusdem generis*, it is not certain that the new league will be able to avoid the rock upon which the old league made shipwreck.

Assume that a monarchical *coup d'état* is successfully carried out in one of the constituent States, and that the results of it are, in the opinion of the General Council of the League, such as to threaten the security or independence of another State, or even to menace the stability of the established European polity. Will it not be incumbent upon the executive of the League to declare the State, whose government has been revolutionized in an absolutist direction, excommunicate? Will not the League be called upon to bring back the 'guilty State' into the bosom of the League of Nations? But if so, what is to become of the accepted principle of non-intervention? Is the doctrine of Metternich to prevail against that of Castlereagh? And if it does, is there not a serious danger that the League of Peace will founder upon the self-same rock which proved fatal to the high hopes and laudable endeavours of the Tsar Alexander and his Holy Allies?

The foundering of the ship was not essentially due to the fact that it was manned by autocrats. That is a point which cannot be too often or too strongly emphasized. Autocracy, let it be repeated, was not of the essence of the experiment; it was an accident of the times in which it was tried. The rocks upon which the vessel foundered would have rendered the navigation difficult whether the vessel had been manned by autocrats or by democrats. It is assumed that in any

future voyage it will be manned by democrats; but thus far nothing has been said as to the structure of the vessel itself.

Many architects have already been at work upon the plans. To examine them in all their variations of detail would be impossible. We may take as typical of many the programme put forward by the *League of Nations Society*.

The programme is as follows:

1. That a Treaty shall be made as soon as possible whereby as many States as are willing shall form a League binding themselves to use peaceful methods for dealing with all disputes arising among them.

2. That such methods shall be as follows:

(*a*) All disputes arising out of questions of International Law or the interpretation of Treaties shall be referred to the Hague Court of Arbitration, or some other judicial tribunal, whose decisions shall be final and shall be carried into effect by the parties concerned.

(*b*) All other disputes shall be referred to and investigated and reported upon by a Council of Inquiry and Conciliation: the Council to be representative of the States which form the League.

3. That the States which are members of the League shall unite in any action necessary for ensuring that every member shall abide by the terms of the Treaty; and in particular shall jointly use forthwith both their economic and military forces against any one of their number that goes to war, or commits acts of hostility against another before any question arising shall be submitted as provided in the foregoing Articles.

4. That the States which are members of the League shall make provision for mutual defence, diplomatic, economic, or military, in the event of any of them being attacked by a State, not a member of the League, which refuses to submit the case to an appropriate Tribunal or Council.

5. That conferences between the members of the League shall be held from time to time to consider international matters of a general character, and to formulate and codify rules of international law, which, unless some member shall signify its dissent within a stated period, shall hereafter govern in the decisions of the Judicial Tribunal mentioned in Article 2 (*a*).

6. That any civilized State desiring to join the League shall be admitted to membership.

The League, it will be noted, is to rest upon a mutual contract. The memorandum agreed upon by the Inter-allied Labour and Socialist Conference puts the point thus: 'By a solemn agreement all the States and peoples consulted shall pledge themselves to submit every issue between two or more of them to arbitration.' It will not escape notice that 'Labour' is willing to accept the principle of compulsory arbitration in international disputes, despite the fact that it has consistently refused to admit it in reference to industrial disputes at home. Yet, as compared with the former, the issues raised by the latter are relatively simple. But let this contradiction pass. Thus far the League of Nations does but extend the principle of general treaties of arbitration, such as that concluded between Great Britain and France in 1904, or that concluded by the United States with France and Great Britain in the autumn of 1914. Such treaties, it need not be said, possess a significance which far transcends the *ad hoc* arbitrations by which during the last hundred years an increasing number of disputes have been successfully terminated.

A second feature of the scheme is the provision of an international or super-national tribunal, endowed with very ample jurisdiction. This is no light matter, and it is one in regard to which we must needs move with the utmost circumspection. The wise words of an eminent jurist, the late Lord Parker, should, in this connexion, be laid to heart: 'Legal tribunals for the administration of international law . . . must be left, in my opinion, to grow out of that sense of mutual obligation which is beginning to exist amongst nations. If we attack that part of the problem at first I have very serious fears that the whole structure which we are trying to build may fall about our ears. . . . It is a very serious matter to ask great nations in the present day to agree beforehand to submit disputes of whatever nature to the arbitrament of a tribunal consisting of representatives of some two dozen or three dozen States, many of whom may be directly interested in casting their votes on this side or on that.'[1] Reference to the pro-

[1] *Official Report, House of Lords*, vol. xxix. 13. 504.

gramme of the League of Nations Society will show that the Society approaches the problem somewhat more confidently. In the second article, international disputes are divided into two categories. (i) Those which are described as 'justiciable', i.e. 'all disputes arising out of questions of International Law or the interpretation of Treaties'; in fact, those which are of a kind amenable to a process of law. These are to be referred to 'the Hague Court of Arbitration, or some other judicial tribunal, whose decisions shall be final'. (ii) All other disputes, such as disputes arising from conflicts of honour or interest. Such disputes cannot be decided by a judicial tribunal for the simple reason that there is no law applicable to them, nor can there be. It is proposed, therefore, that these should be referred to a Council of Inquiry and Conciliation, composed of representatives of the States which form the League. It will be observed that in regard to the former category, justiciable disputes, the principle of *compulsory arbitration* is to be applied; in regard to the latter, the principle of *conciliation*, each State being left free in the last resort to accept or refuse the recommendation of the Council.

Two questions, at this point, obtrude themselves. First: is 'International Law' in a sufficiently developed state to form the basis for the decisions of a judicial tribunal, with power to enforce its judgements upon all litigants amenable to its jurisdiction? Secondly, is the distinction between 'justiciable' and 'non-justiciable' disputes so real and important as is commonly assumed?

In regard to the first, there is undeniable force in the contention of Lord Parker that 'such communal life as exists among nations is based and must be based upon customary rules of conduct', and that these customary rules are the resultant of a long process of social evolution, the stages of which cannot be hurried. The zealous advocates of a League of Nations are in some danger, as he pertinently points out, of devoting their attention to the details of the superstructure without having made sure of the stability of the foundations, forgetful of the fact that 'every sound system of municipal law, with its tribunals and its organized police, is a creation

of historical growth, having its roots in the far past. It is supported, in reality, not so much by organized force as by that sense of mutual obligation and respect for the rights of others which lies at the root of, and forms the foundation of, those settled rules of conduct among individuals which alone make law and order possible in the community.'[1] This was not said by Lord Parker nor is it quoted here with any view of prejudging the possibility of the formation of an international polity. Quite otherwise. It was said and is here quoted as a warning to those who would hurry the pace, with the probable result of attaining, in the long run, less speed. International Law is itself in an inchoate condition at present; until it is more amply developed it would not be easy for a judicial tribunal to interpret its rules, nor would it be easy to secure obedience to its decrees.

Even more difficult, however, is the question as to the settlement of disputes which are admittedly non-justiciable. In regard to these there is no question of the imposition of a Decree; the utmost that is hoped for is the acceptance of a Report. But is the distinction between justiciable and non-justiciable disputes quite so broad and clear as the League of Nations Society's programme suggests? Jurists are familiar with the history of the growth of equitable jurisdiction. The English Court of Chancery affords an admirable illustration of the manner in which the maxims of equity glide almost imperceptibly into rules of law. Non-justiciable disputes were precisely those which could not be determined in the ordinary courts of law, and which fell, therefore, within the less rigid jurisdiction of the Chancellor, the keeper of the King's conscience. The multiplication of these equity cases compelled, in due course, the erection of a separate court, with special rules of procedure, and the rules, according to which justice was administered in the Chancery Courts, hardened in time into a system of law not less precise than that which governed the decisions of the ordinary courts of law. Is it not conceivable that if an International Council be established alongside an International Tribunal, something of the same sort

[1] *Lords' Report, op. cit.*, pp. 499, 500.

should happen, and that non-justiciable cases should in increasing numbers pass into the other category?

But in either case there remains the question of the 'sanction', the means by which, if enforceable, the award is to be enforced. *Ubi ius ibi remedium* is a well-known maxim of English law. It must apply to international not less than to municipal law. To set up a tribunal without devising a sanction would, it is generally agreed, be futile. 'Behind law', as Mr. Balfour has well said, 'there must be power. It is good that the accepted practices of warfare should become ever more humane. It is good that before peace is broken the would-be belligerents should be compelled to discuss their differences in some congress of the nations. It is good that the security of the smaller States should be fenced round with peculiar care. But all the precautions are mere scraps of paper unless they can be enforced.' But how? With the raising of that question unanimity is at an end. Is the basis of the sanction to be force, an international police force? Or economic, an attempt to bring back the guilty State into the bosom of the League by means of a commercial boycott? Or merely moral, a species of international Coventry?

On this point, and not only on this, a sharp difference of opinion has revealed itself between the adherents of the English League of Nations Society and the American League to Enforce Peace. The proposals of the latter contemplate the ultimate employment of force, but they would merely bind the leagued States to employ the military and economic forces of the League against a recalcitrant member who made war upon another member, *without having previously submitted the matter in dispute to the appointed Tribunal or Council* as the case might be. The English League would go further, and insist that members should be required to pledge themselves to enforce in justiciable cases, the judgement of the Court. And logic would seem, in this matter, to lie with the proposals of the English Society; for if one State may with impunity, or at least without the certainty of punishment, break away, why not two or three or four? In which case we should find ourselves in the presence of two hostile and armed camps. It is

only fair, however, to add that the American Society relies upon the fact that the twelve months provided for the hearing of a justiciable case would almost invariably give time for friendly offices on both sides to prevail, and that, in consequence, armed conflict would, in fact, be avoided. On another point which has given rise to a difference of opinion the logical advantage would seem to lie with the English disputants. The English League would bind all members to resist by force the aggression of an outsider upon a member of the League; the American League would not. But the absence of such an obligation would seem to offer to an aggressively minded Power an irresistible temptation to remain outside the ranks of the League. 'It will then', as an acute critic has pointed out, 'be free to attack at a minute's notice without incurring the certainty of having to fight all the members of the League; whereas, if it is inside the League, it must at least give its intended victim a year's notice or, in the alternative, fight the whole League.'[1]

So much for the interpretation and administration of the law of the nations. But the existence of law implies a law-making body. What provisions do the programmes under examination contain for such a body? In both cases the provision is somewhat halting. The germs of an embryo legislature may perhaps be discovered in the fourth article of the American Society which, as will be seen, is *totidem verbis* embodied in the programme of the English Society. It runs as follows: 'Conferences between the signatory Powers shall be held, from time to time, to formulate and codify rules of international law, which, unless some signatory shall signify its dissent within a stated period, shall govern in the decisions of the Judicial Tribunal mentioned in Article I.' The mention of an international legislature is scrupulously avoided. No such scruple assailed the Inter-allied Labour and Socialist Conference. Boldly and with incontrovertible logic it proclaims the necessity 'to form an International Legislature in which the representatives of every civilized State would have their allotted

[1] *The Use of Force by the League*, by A. Williams, M.P., L. of N. S. Publications, No. 15, p. 11.

share, and energetically to push forward, step by step, the development of international legislation agreed to by, and definitely binding upon, the several States'.[1] The only chance of escape for the timid or the recalcitrant would seem to be to accept the status of an uncivilized State. In essence there would not perhaps be much difference between the 'confidence' desiderated by the League, and the Legislature almost truculently demanded by the Inter-allied Socialists, but as regards boldness, lucidity, and uncompromising logic, honours rest with the latter.

Other questions which emerge from recent discussions must receive more scant notice than their intrinsic importance demands. There is the problem, for instance, of Sovereignty. Any effective League of Nations must necessarily curtail national sovereignty. Kant perceived and faced the difficulty more than a century ago; nor did he shrink from the logical conclusion. 'There can be, according to reason, no other way of advancing from the lawless conditions which war implies than by States yielding up their savage lawless freedom, just as individuals have done, and yielding to the coercion of law.' He argues, in effect, that among States, as among individuals, the larger and truer liberty can be secured only by a curtailment of that lawless licence which he declared to be 'the negation of civilization and the brutal degradation of humanity'. To imagine that there can be a League of Nations without some curtailment of national sovereignty is not only to nourish an immediate delusion but to lay up for the future inevitable disappointment.

More disputable is the question as to disarmament. Is some measure of disarmament to be regarded either as an indispensable preliminary or an inseparable adjunct to the formation of a League of Nations? On this point there is considerable divergence of opinion among the advocates of a League, but by none of them, it would appear, is immediate and complete disarmament deemed feasible. Even the Inter-allied Socialists contemplate the perpetuation of armed forces 'for self-defence and for such action as the League of Nations

[1] *Memorandum on War Aims*, p. 8.

may ask them to take in defence of international right', though they hold that the 'League of Nations, in order to prepare for the concerted abolition of compulsory military service in all countries, must first take steps for the prohibition of fresh armaments on land and sea, and for the common limitation of the existing armaments by which all the peoples are already overburdened'. The House of Lords sounded a somewhat less dogmatic note on the subject than the Socialist Conference. Lord Parmoor, perhaps the most uncompromising advocate of a League, declared it to be universally recognized that 'there must be some system of relative disarmament in order that a League of Peace may be effected'. Lord Lansdowne, on the other hand, is opposed to the idea of making disarmament a condition precedent to the formation of a League, partly, by reason of the difficulty of 'rationing' the different members of the League in reference to men, guns, ships, submarines, and mines; partly because, in his view, to insist upon precedent or even concurrent disarmament would be to put the cart before the horse. Let peace among the nations be assured, and disarmament would automatically ensue; but until peace is assured it would be folly to expect the nations to disarm. Those who hold that armaments are, in themselves, to be counted among the more potent causes of war will doubtless dissent from this reasoning; but it may be taken, nevertheless, to represent the sober judgement of men of affairs, and it will be well to take account of it in any serious discussion of the subject.

That discussion must proceed. Men will not be content, and should not be content, after the prolonged agony of the last four years, to acquiesce in the re-establishment of an international system which, if it did not produce, at least permitted, the cataclysm in which mankind has been involved. Through the long agony men have been sustained by the hope that the issue of this war may be a lasting peace; that they are, in fact, waging a war to end war. Whether that hope can be realized it is impossible to say; but this much is certain, that there will be a serious effort to organize peace. If the need for such an organization cried aloud to the

autocracies of 1815, it will cry much louder in the ears of the democracies by whom this present conflict has been waged, and in whose hands the destinies of the world will lie when peace is happily restored.

Nor is the desire for peace confined to the allied democracies. It is shared by our enemies. The issue between us is not as to the end, but as to the means. Both sets of combatants look forward to the healing of the nations, but as to the method of treatment they are poles asunder. 'After bloody victories the world will be healed by being Germanized.' Thus did Lamprecht summarize the German ideal of world-peace in 1914. It must be peace by the German sword: the world cannot be at rest until Dante's dream of a universal empire is realized by the genius of the Hohenzollern. Far different is the ideal for which we strive. The German dilemma presents no difficulty to us. We desire neither *Weltmacht* for ourselves nor *Niedergang* for any people that will live at peace with us. Our ideal is that of a Commonwealth of Free Nations, self-governing as regards internal affairs, but united in a free commonwealth for the advancement of ideas common to all.

Such a commonwealth, we do well to remind ourselves, does in fact already exist. Under the Sovereignty of the British Crown there is in being a Commonwealth of Free Nations. The British Empire is in truth, as General Smuts has justly said, 'the only successful experiment in international government that has ever been made'. That experiment has, moreover, this vital quality: it has in it the element of growth. It has proceeded thus far by an evolutionary process; and the process is not exhausted. Another branch of the same family has tried a similar though distinct experiment under somewhat different conditions. The United States of America have solved, in their own way, the problem of union without unity. The next and most obvious step towards a League of Free Nations would seem to be a closer union between two branches of a race which, but for blunders of statesmanship, might never have been divided. Other steps may follow in due course; but the ascent will not be devoid of difficulty,

and even of danger; each step, therefore, should be made good before the next is taken. Progress should be without rest; but reaction and disappointment are certain to ensue from undue haste. The assault delivered by Germany upon a world mostly unsuspecting and almost wholly unprepared has called into being an embryonic League of Free Nations. It will be the task of prudent statesmanship gradually to transform a League into a Commonwealth; a temporary alliance into an organic Polity, endowed with the organs appropriate to the higher stage of political development, with a Legislature, an Executive, and a Judiciary. But to attempt to include in such a Commonwealth States which are in very different stages of political growth is only to court the failure which inevitably overtook the League of Autocrats. The Holy Alliance foundered on the rock of intervention; it was wrecked in the endeavour to bring back guilty States into the bosom of the Great Alliance. Similar experiments will escape similar disaster only if membership in the League is, in the first instance, confined to States reasonably equal in power, not disparate in government, inheriting similar traditions, and inspired by common ideals. To attempt more is to risk all.

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